BING

MARCH
1986

Edited by REG BRISTO

NO 79

From reports we get from around the country Bing is well to the fore on radio, both national and local. All members are urged to "keep the pot a'boiling" with requests to both the well-known middle-of-the-road presenters and to the "local lads".

This is particularly important in view of the announcement that BBC-Radio 2 is now "under new management" with the avowed aim of divorcing it from the wretched Radio-1 and catering more for the middle-of-the-roaders. Reinforce your requests with a phrase like "the great voice of Bing...."

We understand one well-known DJ is so incensed at the new approach to Radio-2 that he is threatening to resign as he "only wants to play rock..."

Promises, promises! If only he WOULD! Snag is, having made radio inane, they graduate to TV and proceed to do the same thing to that!

Warmest thanks to all those who sent us Christmas greetings. The holly, the ivy, and the sparrows, together with the more ingenious cards, all had a place of honour !

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Magazine of THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE, published quarterly.

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American/Canadian 12 dollars airmail, 8 dollars surface mail. Australia the equivalent to £5.00 airmail, £4.00 surface mail.

We notified US/Canadian members cheques (checks) drawn on their local banks were no longer acceptable owing to losses on discounting them in the UK. Happily, the "dollar-bill" solution is working out admirably; loss is minimal, and money is actually saved by members who used to remit IMO's. Australian members may like to follow suit.

TAPE/DISC CONSULTANTS: Lionel Pairpoint, 86 Ellesmere Aven., Mill Hill, London, N.W.7.

FILM CONSULTANTS: Fred Reynolds, 69 Heathmere Aven., Yardley, Birmingham, B25 8RQ
Keith Parkinson, 'Meadowcroft',Houghtons Lane, Eccleston, St. HELENS, M'Side WA10 5LD
(NOTE: Keith is also UK representative of the (Australian) Victoria Bing Crosby Society which issues an excellent magazine. Details from Keith with SAE who, we also believe, accepts subscriptions for UK members).

CHIEF PUBLICIST: Leslie Gaylor, 114 Medina Avenue, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 1HG

A "X" here indicates your subs are due: [ ]

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS:

	Page
Editorial..	4
Rembrandt Rendezvous (John Marshall)	5
Fingers Crossed Dept!	6
Bing on the Box (radio/TV). ..	7
Uncle Tom's Collection by Danny O'Sullivan..	13
Track Events, incorporating 'related matters', incl. Colin Pugh.	15
St. Andrews: Home of Golf.. .	32
Letters	33
Trading Post	36
From all quarters.	38
BING CROSBY : CREMO SINGER. .	47

and, hopefully, IT STARTED WITH A BING!

Regarding the note above re. Keith Parkinson representing the Victoria Crosby Society, member Frank Challenger writes:"I am sure that several members including myself are unhappy about the exchange situation and remittance of subs to THE BING CROSBY HISTORICAL SOCIETY. Might members be consulted with a view to one person accepting the post of UK agent/representative so that subscriptions might be sent en bloc". Sensible suggestion tho' its possible members of the BCHS are required to renew at different times all thro' the year. Still, its worth attention - and we note that FRANK MURPHY, of the Colour Photo Club, is designated "UK delegate". Perhaps Frank can weigh in re. Frank Challenger's suggestion?

Plenty of record news, not to mention social events, in this issue and it may prove that some regular features have been squeezed out. A healthy situation for Crosbyana. Incidentally, does a fair recording of Bing's very early film solo GOING HOLLYWOOD exist? We saw a fragment in Barry Norman's HOLLYWOOD GREATS you will recall. It was done for the soundtrack only. If anyone has one we would all be interested to know, especially MR. I. R. SHERWOOD, 33 Larch Rd., Mount Est., Milford Haven, Dyfed,SA73 1BY

EDITORIAL

Well, our digital faux-pas whereby we got stuck on "all the sevens" in numbering the previous issue, calling it No. 77 instead of its rightful "78" caused no great distress! In fact it went by without almost no comment. True one humorist said we could, as an afterthought, have numbered it "77 + " This didn't occur to us - and if it had we wouldn't have countenanced such a numerical subterfuge ! The main feeling by those who did see fit to mention it was that it was what is IN the magazine, not how we see fit to number it, that counts. All right then. We're back on course now with No. 79.

And that serves to remind us all that the next issue (barring digital and any other accidents!) will be No. 80! It needs no calculator or computer to reveal that, divided by four (issues per annum) we will complete 20 years of BING in its present format.

IT WOULD need a computer (or a lot of painstaking work) to tell us how many records have been reviewed in that period, or how many members' letters have been printed, how many memories have been revived, how many old friends have been reunited, or perhaps more importantly, how many NEW friendships have been founded in those 20 years? Founded on the common interest of BING CROSBY! How many times have we loaded up the boot of the car (various cars over 20 years! tho' a large boot was always a prerequisite - and we remember the occasion when the car was pinched with all the overseas members' copies in it!) and trundled off to the post office.....ah me, it doesn't really bear thinking about, does it!

Is it all worthwhile; HAS it been worthwhile. Well, we were happy to receive a missive from CYRIL PARKER of Penn, Wolverhampton which said, among other things:

> THANKS FOR ALL THE CONTINUED EXCELLENT WORK ON "BING": THANKS TO LES GAYLOR FOR KEEPING ALAN DELL WELL SUPPLIED: THANKS TO ALL THOSE WHO ARE ABLE TO SUPPLY VIDEO COPIES OF BING FILMS, CASSETTES, RECORD. THANKS TO ALL WHO HELP AND PRODUCE THE REALLY EXCELLENT 'CHRONOLOGICAL BING'...AND THE DISCOGRAPHIES, AND THE.... '

WHOA CYRIL! WE'LL SETTLE FOR THAT!

Is it worthwhile then? It most certainly is.

REMBRANDT RENDEZVOUS

announced in JOHN MARSHALL'S inimitable style:

This year's day at THE REMBRANDT HOTEL, in South Kensington, LONDON, will be on APRIL 26TH and will, as usual, begin any time you happen to be in the Kensington vicinity around 1.00pm. No need to stand around shivering or even, hopefully, enjoying some of that fine spring weather. Tickets are the same as last year, or indeed, as they were in 1984 (which can't be bad) so that £12.50p gets you a full day of what's good for you in the very best of company.

Remembered from the WALDORF, ALAN YOUNG'S MUSIC will be a highlight for the evening and dancing to Bing's kind of melodies won't interfere with the man himself filling the airwaves all the day through.

As a special attraction you can get answers to some of those 1986 questions that bother you, straight from the mouth of the head horse at MCA. LAIN McLAY, PROJECTS MANAGER for the company - and about to become a name to remember - will be at the podium and happy to take on all comers.

Chances are rated high for a personal appearance by DAVID JACOBS, who is keeping Bing well-aired on BBC Radio 2 and we won't be at all surprised if a couple of other popular names pop in for a visit. Thanks to ALAN and the kind of backing we failed to come up with last time, cabaret time will give you the chance to escape from the bathroom and thrill us all to the core, on stage. MICHAEL COLLINS promised us a vocal breakthrough and we haven't forgotten, now that the ice has been broken.

Its another REMBRANDT buffet, considered by all to be of a superior kind; we do know that bar prices, coffee &c, are excellent - and all going well, parking won't be any more of a problem than in '85. Things to buy, or try selling a few for yourself but, basically, its another great chance to meet old faces and perchance a few new ones. The rooms are booked, the music too, so all that remains is for you TO LET US KNOW YOU'LL BE THERE WITH US - AS SOON AS POSSIBLE PLEASE.

JOHN C. MARSHALL, 39 Kings Rd.,
TEDDINGTON, Midd'x Tel: 01-977-6180
TW11 0QD
Cheques if possible, tickets by return.

It only remains to add that THE REMBRANDT is in a perfectly straight line across the road from the VICTORIA & ALBERT MUSEUM, a genuine five-minute stroll from SOUTH KENSINGTON UNDERGROUND STATION.

FINGERS CROSSED DEPT.

es indeed! Fingerscrossed for there's many a slip betwixt cup and lip, no counting of chicks before they are hatched and any other old cliche you may care to dream up - BUT, how does an album consisting of the following appeal to you? Very much, I'm sure:

1.	Getting to know you	L6220 -A	1951
2.	Love walked in (Gershwin)	L4554 -A	1947
3.	Still the bluebird sings	DLA 1770 -A	1939
4.	The waltz you saved for me	DLA 2057 -A	1940
5.	Lost in loveliness	7616 -1	1954
6.	Dearly beloved(Kern)	3412 -A	1944
7.	Golden earings	L4604 -B	1947
8.	Can I forget you?	DLA 939 -A	1937
9.	Rosalie (Porter)	L4608 -A	1947
10.	Vaya con dios	L7516 -I	1953
11.	La vie en rose	L5697 -A	1950
12.	Beautiful love	L3473 -A	1944
13.	Indian summer	L6050 -A	1951
14.	It had to be you	L6650 -A	1952
15.	The rose of Tralee	L3896 -A	1945
16.	The story of Sorrento	L4646 -A	1947
17.	I'll remember April	L3455 -A	1944
18.	The one rose	DLA741 -A	1937
19.	Yours is my heart alone (You are my heart's delight)	DLA969 -A	1940
20.	Granada	L6043 -A	1951

We've heard from MCA, via JOHN MARSHALL (yes, that man again!) that all this is very much in hand and will be out well in time for the Rembrandt rendezvous on previous page. Some how John has succeeded where so many others have valiantly failed and gained the ear and earnest attention of MCA projects executive IAIN McLAY who, you will have already noted, will be at the Rembrandt and the above is the almost certain result. We're not concerned how John did it; we're just delighted he has!

You will like the packaging as much as the repertoire; a splendid picture of Bing framed in blue and gold appropriately enough AND - what of the title!!

"BING CROSBY - IN DEMAND !"

The time-span of the recordings ranges from 1937 to 1954 - a fair enough cross-section one might reasonably claim. The choice, incidentally, is John Marshall's (how DOES that man do it?) One can have an interesting time working out which have appeared on LP before. Not too many and not all that often with plenty which is new. It certainly gets away from the DON'T FENCE ME IN, TOO RAL-LOO-RAL-LOO-RAL, MOONLIGHT BECOMES YOU, SWINGING ON A STAR, McNAMARA'S BAND syndrome.

We're afforded an illuminating insight as to the procedure. Seems MCA here send in their requisition, order, demand call it what you will, to the States and Hey! Presto - back comes a master-tape. At least, THAT is why we're finger-crossed at the moment! The last MCA issue (also cutting new ground, by the way, BING SINGS BROADWAY) was, you recall, a free-lance job by Chris. Ellis. Certainly sales will be needed to back this project - and IT needs projection, too. Must not be 'sneaked onto the market.

BING ON THE BOX

*******(RADIO & TELEVISION)**********

ost members, it seems, scanned the radio and TV schedules at Christmas with mounting dismay for it appeared that out of the welter of films to be screened there was no Crosby film featured. We have come to expect, with the general association of Bing with Yuletide, at least one of his cheery, musical, escapist films at that time even if it is HOLIDAY INN or WHITE CHRISTMAS. We say 'even if' because these films have had their share of TV time! One letter summed it up fairly neatly:

> "I see we're not getting a Bing film this Christmas, so thank goodness for the video-recorder. Its quite plain BBC and ITV strain to outdo each other at these peak viewing times with the latest 'sensational' epics. Personally, I would rather sit in the garden shed on Christmas day in the cold than watch BOND 007; but I appreciate there must be millions - well, thousands - who revel in these highly expensive but fanciful epics. The same who no doubt revel in those ghastly 'pop' music videos we're now having inflicted upon us...."

But it didn't turn so bad after all, did it? Bing took a fair share in the general seasonal programmes of the media. Around a week before Christmas HIGH SOCIETY was shewn again (either HTV or TSW - can't now remember which) which must make this one of the most-screened films of all time. And its always good to see it but it reminds us how unlucky those were who bought the commercial release of this MGM film for around £29.00. Copyright laws are in a real fix these days. TV, radio and video manufacturers all advertise "record yourfavourite programme" (even while you watch another!) yet actually all the programmes are copyright. It would, however, be quite preposterous to think anyone takes any notice of that even tho' some makers do put in a 'small-print' note to their advertising literature 'that some programmes may be the subject of copyright'. A mean little dodge on their part perhaps! Then again, the BBC/ITV atitude seems to be a cautious "well, its all right if you're only going to show them in your own home". So all round, everyone tries to make the best of a bad job as far as enforcing the copyright laws. Good job for us, I hasten to add.

Apart from HIGH SOCIETY, Channel 4 brought a lot of delight by screening the MEMORY LANE programme which contained so much of Bing's Mack Sennett work. Indeed, we have letters which show this delight for the writers, in some cases, had never seen these before - and now have them safely on video-tape. "To see Bing at last, singing AUF WIEDERSEHEN, MY DEAR, in evening dress in front of an orchestra was a gremendous experience," said one. "And those other beautiful songs - available ONLY thro' these film 'shorts' - like EVERY TIME MY HEART BEATS, LOVABLE, and the ONLY filmed version of WHERE THE BLUE OF THE NIGHT all made a wonderful treat for so many - especially new video owners."

Indeed, a treat.

WHITE CHRISTMAS was, of course, well in evidence on radio. That at least is mandatory. But there was a real gem of a radio item. It came in the unlikely A BOX AT THE OPERA programme, BBC-2, Sunday, December 29. The presenter, JOHN AMISS, played Bing's record of LULLABY (from Jocelyn)

- this not to be confused with Brahms LULLABY which Bing also made a splendid job of recording. Amiss said he presented it as a "fun item" but at the end he remarked: "Wasn't that lovely!" And it certainly was - and is.

> I've never known this record broadcast before tho' no doubt it has been. It is certainly one of Bing's finest works yet probably one of the least known. I imagine JOCELYN is a lesser-known opera. As far as can be ascertained it has been reissued (from its original 78rpm issue) just once; that was on Record 4 of the US 'READERS DIGEST' collection BING SINGS AGAIN. And needless to say, that set is not all that common in Britain.

A JACK KAPP INSPIRATION:

No doubt this was one of Jack Kapp's inspirations which got Bing away from the "popular-song" routine and thus broaden his appeal. The record was notable in quite another way for the orchestra was that of Victor Young and the celebrated classical violinist, Jascha Haefitz, was featured behind Bing's singing and during the musical 'bridge'. Haefitz was indeed a virtuosi violinist and it was a considerable tribute to Bing that he appeared on record with him. Bing, it will be known, was more used to Joe Venuti accompanying him on the fiddle !

The recording was made on July 13, 1946 and at the same session Bing recorded another song not normally associated with a "popular style" singer, WHERE MY CARAVAN HAS RESTED. Jascha Haefitz was also featured on this selection. This song too is as little known in Bing's recording repertoire as LULLABY. I must confess that while the last-named IS a beautiful record, to my ears CARAVAN isn't. This was one song at least that Bing didn't seem happy about. There is involved a lot of aaahing (without words) and Bing, alas, seemed to get a little lugubrious about it all. No doubt others won't share this view !

PSST! I suppose we'd better acknowledge that the jazz-orientated will claim Joe Venuti was, in his field, as much a virtuoso as Jascha Haefitz - fair enough!

LBC BBC RADIO 6 - 7pm on Christmas day had PETER HETHERINGTON of Metro Radio (Newcastle) presenting MEMORIES OF BING, consisting mainly of Crosby film extracts. This proved a most enjoyable hour; and it will be known that PETER HETHERINGTON attends the ICC Gateshead social events organised by JOHN JOYCE.

Elsewhere in this issue we should be showing a reproduction of a report concerning the much-publicised BBC search for a Bing look-alike - someone who looked rather like Bing! Apparently this character was required for THE GOLDEN OLDIE CHRISTMAS SHOW on BBC-1 TV. Whilst Bing's recording of WHITE CHRISTMAS was played, the screen showed a country house being built while the figure, depicting Bing (with pipe) arrived by car. There followed a shot of 'Bing' taking some golf swings; finally the house was shewn completed with snow falling.

Why, Bing even cropped up in a MASTERMIND programme! And in a "bookshelf" programme where writer Len Deighton referred to Bing's singing seeming so easy - and hoped his writing (Deighton's) appeared like that to readers.

Then, of course, MCM's "THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT" cropped up again on Channel 4, well featuring Mr. C.

So, and bearing in mind what we say on page 2 about the large number of records to be heard locally and nationally, Bing certainly played his usual part in the Christmas enjoyment. (Special thanks to Trevor Wagstaffe and George Patmore).

LESLIE GAYLOR

As he indicated in the Christmas issue of BING, Leslie duly reached - and passed - the important milestone of retirement. We detect a certain degree of apprehension on his part which is very natural. But such are the times there are many who are experiencing retirement prematurely under the more fashionable, if just as unacceptable term, "redundant". Be that as it may, we are sure that within a short space of time Les will begin to wonder how he ever found time to go to work!

ay I, firstly, thank so many members who sent me Christmas cards and their good wishes for 1986 coupled with extra good wishes for a long and happy retirement for me. The actual date of this event was February 10 - and believe it or not, came to be announced on BBC radio! No doubt everyone pauses to reflect when they reach this stage of their lives and I am certainly no exception to the general rule. I shall concentrate on settling down to the vastly changed conditions as everyone does - and at the same time be very thankful that I have reached the retirement age.

I'm still getting enough mail to keep me busy and to restrain me from introspection! A recurring theme in letters, cropping up with some regularity, concerns the vast amount of CBS radio material made by Bing with Buddy Cole; members want to know if there is any news, or indeed, any chance of more of this material becoming available - that is, apart from what Ken Barnes negotiated and refurbished with Pete Moore.

> In answer all I can say is that I haven't the slightest idea, and frankly, I am not optimistic. I would love to have this stuff issued as much as anyone but I feel the average member isn't aware that so much negotiating and 'permission' has to be gone through to get such items released for the record-buyer.

I have some correspondence which possibly I've mentioned before, but may be worth referring to as it illustrates what I've said above about the many difficulties arising. A letter dated October 5, 1973, from Nancy Briggs, secretary to Basil Grillo, the No. 1 man in the Crosby organisation (and still its adviser) went as follows:

> "In the absence of Mr. Grillo who is on an extended trip to the Orient, I will try to advise you of the situation with regard to the CBS radio show material, as I understand it.
>
> I do know that Mr. Grillo has gone into this many times as we are well aware of the potential of the material contained in these shows. However, any sale of said material

involves violations of union agreements (The American Federation of Musicians and The American Federation of Television and Radio Artists) as well as the rights of publishers, composers, and artists and would involve substantial royalty payments if the material could be cleared."

When Basil Grillo got back from the orient he sent me a letter dated November 5, 1973, which read:

> "Just to clarify Nancy's letter to you of October 5, it is at present impossible to use any of the material involved in the CBS Radio Shows which are under discussion. Any such use would, under our recording contract, require complete repayment which simply would not be economically feasible at this point."

Since these letters of 1973 Basil Grillo has successfully negotiated with CBS Radio with the result that the Crosby organisation is now the sole owner of the recordings. But, regrettably, they are just held in store. A new factor comes into it, too, now that since Bing's decease, the Crosby Estate is acutely involved and whether its well-founded or not, we do get talk of nonco-operation from that quarter.

So that's the situation. One can only hope that someone somewhere gets the necessary inspiration to progress the matter. Like so many others, I would very much like to have these tracks.

****

Its great to have a friend in the States such as Judge Francis Smith who continues to keep me well supplied with splendid items of Bing interest; despite his onerous judicial duties Frank misses no opportunity to keep in touch and maintain his support for Bing's talents and to his memory. He has recently sent me a letter he received from Mr. Peter V. Ueberroth, the Commissioner for the Major League Baseball, dated February 5, 1986. In this, the commissioner states that CBS records released a record containing the official music of the Olympic Games in 1972 and considered the record was still available.

Frank had one of his able secretaries, Lucille, get on to CBS records and learned, however, that there was no indication that Bing had participated in the recording. Frank is awaiting the record and is confident that Bing's voice will be heard on it.

But this caused me to go through my files to find a letter to me from Larry Crosby dated July 25, 1972, in which he, Larry, said: "There is a request (from the governing body) that Bing would record a song called MARCHING ALONG TOGETHER for a theme song for the Games. Without too much searching thro' piles of letters I'm sure I have another letter here saying that Bing never got around to recording this song. I may be wrong. Indeed, I hope I am. We'll find out in due course.

> What I consider even more intriguing, if not sensational, was to learn that Lucille did some research for Frank and HAD COME UP WITH THE NEWS THAT IN THEIR ARCHIVES IN NEW YORK THE NBC RADIO PEOPLE HELD 10 YEARS OF BING'S KRAFT MUSIC HALL BROADCASTS, COMPLETE WITH SCRIPTS. LUCILLE, FORMERLY A SINATRA FAN IS NOW, I GATHER, "ONE OF US"!

I was delighted to hear so many Bing records on the air last Christmas even if we were disappointed at the lack of a Crosby film - as you will read in BING ON THE BOX. It was particularly good to hear tracks from the long-neglected I WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS album, so happily re-released on the CHRISTMAS CLASSICS album.

All best wishes until next time.

****

Editor: We all wish Leslie a speedy adjustment to retirement - and a long and happy one.

We would suggest that Leslie has dropped a bombshell of considerable magnitude in the revelation that NBC has the ten-year run of KRAFT MUSIC HALL broadcasts! If true - and Leslie hopes to have it confirmed via Mr. Justice Smith - it is truly sensational for obviously, the quality would far exceed that of the much-mentioned (and used!) famed Rice tapes, dubbed from John Scott Trotter's discs. One is inclined to declare it unbelievable yet, bearing in mind NBC put out the broadcasts, it is highly likely that they DO have them. We've never given such a possibility a thought before hearing this from Leslie. We shall certainly await confirmation of their existence.

Regarding the Bing/Buddy Cole CBS material, it is surprising to hear it is so hedged in with difficulties regarding issue. Royalties, surely, are based on sales which are easily computed. Regarding composers and musicians, they were made under the usual conditions, i.e. a fixed rate for the sessions for the musicians and credits and computed royalties on, as we've said, sales. I suppose the real obstacle is the basic one: Is there a substantial demand for them?

It may be of interest to recall the material that has been issued. Predominantly, there are the thirty-six tracks that Ken Barnes/ Pete Moore re-orchestrated. The first issue of this material was the Brunswick 12" LP: NEW TRICKS (FOR AN OLD DOG) LAT 8217, twelve tracks. This was subsequently reissued on the Music for Please (EMI) label, MFP 50249 but with the extremely odd replacement of ON THE ALAMO, with the 1931 "A" take of WHERE THE BLUE OF THE NIGHT - palpably NOT a Buddy Cole recording!

> Further, it is known that Ken Barnes obtained more than the 36 tracks so far used and issued. It remains to be seen whether or not anything will eventuate from these.

Many other Bing/Buddy Cole tracks have been issued in various forms and one can only conjecture how they were obtained. Albums have appeared from many quarters, notably Australia, where very unusual Bing/Cole tracks have been heard, including "blow-ups" and studio comments and conversations! But these are the sort of things that are supposed to be Hush-Hush! The situation is very confused, is it not?

A NON-MEMBER has written to us: "I have the following 78s and feel very reluctant to throw them away. If you or any member of your Circle would like them I would be happy to pass them on at no charge at all: THE ONE ROSE/SWEET LEILANI - PENNIES FROM HEAVEN/LET'S CALL A HEART A HEART - EMPTY SADDLES/I'M AN OLD COWHAND - WHAT WILL I TELL MY HEART/ MOONLIGHT & SHADOWS - SO DO I/ONE TWO BUTTON YOUR SHOE - WHEN MOTHER NATURE SINGS HER LULLABY/SILVER ON THE SAGE - YOU'RE A SWEET LITTLE HEADACHE/- JOOBALAI - SUMMERTIME/DEEP PURPLE - SWEET POTATO PIPER/BETWEEN 18 & 19TH ON CHESTNUT ST. --MR. L. G. SEXTON, 126 DEANNWAY, FRIARSCROFT, WORCS.B61 7PN (Phone Bromsgrove 36116)

STOP PRESS

--- on page 12? Well, pages are not always prepared consecutively for many reasons:

This item, amounting to a "progress report" from John Marshall, was received just as we were tying up this issue. Even if it had been completed we would have found a way of passing on this information - perhaps by an inserted separate slip! So important is it - regarding the album projected on Page 6 "FINGERS CROSSED DEPT". All is going well reports John who has actually been to MCA in London. There is a hiccup in that two of the titles listed, namely CAN I FORGET YOU? and STILL THE BLUEBIRD SINGS have been replaced by OUT OF THIS WORLD and ISLE OF INNISFREE. Pity about CAN I FORGET YOU? but its a small amendment. The sleeve has John bubbling over with superlatives - to the extent we HAVE to believe him when he says it is STUNNING! John was also, while at MCA, enabled to offer some suggestions for future Crosby issues but until the current one is "off the ground" we'll leave it at that. How John has found this magic key we don't know! But everyone will be delighted that he has.

ITINERANT MEMBERS is a recurring theme in this issue; with a prolonged Arctic spell (enduring as we write) following a sporadic 'summer' it would be small wonder if the thoughts of all of us didn't turn to emigrating to Australia - or New Zealand, as is the intention of our good friend, ALASTAIR AIREY, of 4C St. Philip Square, London, S.W.8

In truth, however, Alastair is returning <u>home</u> - a true New Zealander apparently for he recently delighted us with a cassette of the true indigenous Maori-choir folklore. Like Renee Chester in Tenerife, he has no intention of severing his connection with us and while we have many enthusiasts in Australia, Alastair will be the first to take BING (magazine) into N.Z. He doesn't however think it possible to take all his records down under, especially the 78s and would like to dispose of them. He's given us no phone no. but you have his address and he would be pleased to see you by appointment.

And Alastair, who is a school-teacher, tells us a lovely story:

For our last school production at Christmas for parents, each class produced a 10-minute item. I had a brilliant singer, a Jamaican boy, who also has a flair for character-acting and improvisation. Our little playlet developed as he being the teacher in charge of a crazy class - and the slapstick was near enough Mack Sennett! It ended with a singing lesson in which the class caterwauled hopelessly.

The 'teacher' said'No! This is how you do it'! He turned to the audience, stepped forward and presented that lovely Welsh song, ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT to a spellbound audience, beautifully accompanied on guitar. How did he learn the song? I had given him a tape of Bing singing it to take home, with the words copied out.

He did a wonderful job that stunned the parent-audience, even finishing with the ALL THROUGH THE NI---IGHT at the end, so typical of Bing's 'broken-note' style. It was really quite memorable.

Editor: Indeed. We don't know how imminent is Alastair's departure; he has been an enthusiastic member for many years and we are as keen as he is that he should continue that way.

IF THE "X" APPEARS IN THE BOX ON PAGE 3, EARLY REMITTANCE IS ESSENTIAL - otherwise, as one letter-writer put it, "you are being subsidised by those who are conscientious in keeping BING going!"

"ONE MAN'S BING...." ...WITH THANKS TO

UNCLE TOM'S COLLECTION

DICK BAKER'S story of how he became a "Bingaholic" in the December BING proved of real interest according to letters, as indeed have most others in what might be called this series. Here one of the "younger fellas" tells of how he fell under the spell and it might be guessed he is of an age comparable to Jim Baker. In the 30's and 40's no story was, perhaps, necessary as Bing's magic cast what might be termed a blanket spell. But as the 50's brought changing styles - most of which Bing still saw come and go - it could have been different....

BY
DANNY O'SULLIVAN
(Cannock,Staffs)

Frankly, I was never hooked on the record hobby; I bought them as the fad caught me perhaps only a couple of times in a year. Then I did get interested in what is now called Country & Western music - Marty Robbins and singers like that - when I could get them. But it wasn't of consuming interest really.

> I have an uncle - TOM O'SULLIVAN who lives in Swanley, Kent - who has collected records for more than 35 years. He has a large collection of Crosby records and is also known for his Al Bowlly collection which I understand is one of the best in the country

For years I was apt to poke fun at him and his records, calling them 'old junk' among other things. I remember once I even offered to make dishes and vases out of them - you know the hot-water method of softening and moulding the old 78s? Often when I visited him he would get me to help him by sticking labels on the sleeves of his records and while doing so he would be playing Bing records, yet I hadn't changed my mind and still thought he was messing about with out-dated rubbish!

A couple of years ago, however, I had an accident at work which resulted in a severe back injury which led to me finishing work altogether - something of a calamity. No doubt leisure is a problem for some when they retire at the usual, or official, age; if you are younger and to an extent handicapped, it can be very difficult indeed. I was thoroughly fed-up and was urged to get a hobby! But really, I hadn't a clue as to go about it. It was during this early period,and when I felt I needed a break,we made a visit to see my uncle in Swanley in the course of which I grumbled about the position I found myself in - and asked if he had any ideas.

> He didn't say too much, understanding my situation, I expect, but on leaving he gave me a couple of 'old junk' Bing records - and said "Play them when you get home - and LISTEN to them!" My retort was "You must be joking!"

Anyway, at home I did play them. Then again...and again. I don't really know how to explain it but suddenly it got me! What a man, what a voice! And I had been calling this 'junk' for years and years. I was truly hooked. Really hooked - I squeezed what records I could out of my uncle - sought them everywhere (I love those junk-shop stories and the

happy discoveries for I'm joining in!)

Then my uncle produced another surprise for me by enrolling me in the Crosby Circle - of which I am very proud to be a member. He must have told Reg something of what had been going on for I was truly delighted to receive - out of the blue - a tape from the Editor of really early, tip-top Bing. I was over the moon!

Now, my wife and children are apt to declare I'm driving them all mad with my qhest for Crosby material for at times all are enlisted. Unfortunately, living here isn't the best of areas to find the records - indeed, it's rather like looking for snow on the desert sands. Still, I'm getting them, here and there, Actually, I often wonder if there are others in this area with whom I could share my great interest in Bing - and perhaps acquire some unwanted records at a reasonable price! I am anxious to build up my collection - shades of my Uncle Tom! I have BING - JUST FOR THE RECORD. What a publication, and what an eye-opener as to what a task the collecfor has, especially a new one.

And I'm afraid I have developed the habit of, when visiting any friends or relations, heading for their record cabinets, especially if 78s are in evidence, in my quest. They too - friends - are now co-operating in the search.

Only recently - in January in fact - I was able to get to Swanley and go thro' my uncle's collection, looking at the many interesting items he has acquired over the years. There was one, a 12-inch 78rpm record which felt waxy and floppy. When played one side was a German broadcast of some sort which I couldn't understand - the label was a plain black and white one. The other side, however, was - Bing singing EVELINA!

The label had worn pretty faint but I was able to copy down precisely the details, which were:

REICHARUNDFUNK:
FABR NR. 8434
AUFTRAF BL8
DATUM: VOL 4
TITEL:
RIMMELSKUND.
REPR. SCHULZ.

BING CROSBY:
EVILINA.

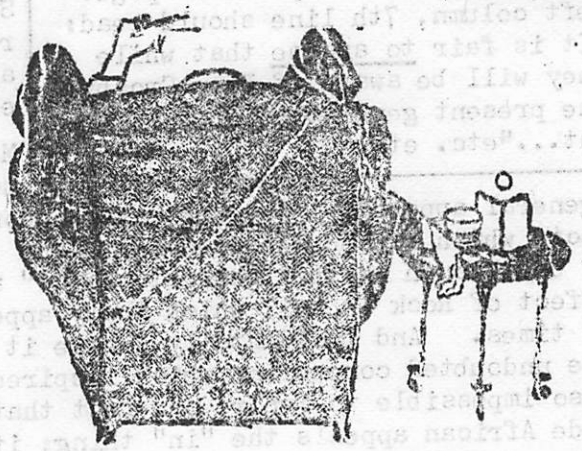
Even a newcomer like me feels this is really something of a Crosby curio. My uncle says he picked it up for sixpence (old money) some years ago, underlining what has been said about the happy hobby of Crosby-collecting. The sound quality of the Bing side was really excellent.

Anyway, I'm well and truly in the fold!

If I might add just a final point: Do you know of anyone producing 78s sleeves as I could do with some decent ones to house the 78s I've already got.

Editor: We're happy for Danny - and good luck in his new-found pursuits. Anyone knowing of the source of 78 sleeves should write to Danny direct at: 21 Pinfold Lane, Norton Canes, Cannock, Staffs, WS11 3PH

BING track EVENTS



THE INDUSTRY HE ENRICHED FORGETS THE WORLD HE ENRICHED, REMEMBERS

The telling comment - above right - which appeared in the 1984 VARIETY 'In Memoriam' notice remains true. That there are two Crosby albums to review as well as delight members is due entirely to the initiative, effort and certainly courage of the 'independent' producers. There are whispers of material 'in the pipeline' from MCA but nothing really tangible to report on. MCA, DECCA, PHILIPS, RCA all remain curiously, perhaps shamefully, inactive as regards Bing's material.

"The industry he enriched forgets.." might easily, and accurately, be amended to "The industry Bing Crosby BUILT.. - and built in a time of world-wide depression!" And now we're in that situation again - minus Bing! It is fair that while they will certainly be aware of Bing Crosby, the present generation of management of the companies mentioned are totally unaware of what happened in 1931. How can they be? Its a forgetful world. Now they are pinning their faith on THIN LIZZY, DIRE STRAITS, WHAM, (they are pop groups if you didn't know!)

Still enough of gloomy, cynical, philosophising, especially as we repeat, there are two intriguing new albums to talk about. And additionally there are what might be termed 'related matters' to occupy us later on.

ENIGMA OF BRITISH MCA:

Diligent readers will recall that a couple of issues back we printed a letter we had written to a top executive of MCA in America. This was in reply to an invitation that executive had made, via US member DICK PEARSON, to indicate what the various Crosby clubs throughout the world felt about what might be issued. Our response was lengthy and critical, particularly as regards the splendid work that MCA in Japan especially, as well as other countries, was doing.

We've had no reply. Perhaps they are still digesting it! However, we have had a whisper that MCA here have put out what might be called 'feelers' to one of our members as to what would constitute an album of "general appeal"? In view of the fact that many of our members write MCA (and other companies) in regard to Bing records, and are seemingly ignored, this must be considered a step forward!

One of our maddening errors/omissions occurs on the previous page: Left column, 7th line should read: "It is fair to assume that while they will be aware of Bing Crosby, the present generation of management..."etc. etc.

(Cont. from previous page):

Should there be any development as a result of these MCA 'feelers' it will assuredly be reported in this issue elsewhere.

Meanwhile, little speculation is needed to arrive at what is known today as "general appeal". One has only to consider last year's BAND/LIVE AID projects which raised the phenomenal sum of over £50-million in a matter of days; such is the "general appeal" it would seem of the mesmerising effect of Rock 'n Roll which truly appears to reach religious fervour at times. And incidentally, while it would be impossible to ignore the undoubted compassion which inspired the young man originally, it is also impossible to ignore the fact that publicity-seeking people quickly made African appeals the "in" thing; it became virtually impossible to turn on radio or TV and not be urged to send some money "no matter how little" to whatever programme was promoting its charity appeal.

Listening to most of the modern popular music (and we readily concede there are honourable if minute exceptions!) its fair to deduce that the words "music" and "singing" have entirely different meanings to the ones we are accustomed to!

> "Bing comes from a bygone age...is passing into history"is a claim often made. To an extent that must be accepted so in these circumstances we may be lucky to hear Bing on the radio as much as we do, and to see him on television. Certainly the modern "whiz-kids" of the contemporary gramophone record industry hold this view and concentrate their efforts on discovering the next bizarre pop group to make millions in a few days - or weeks. Nevertheless, the financial pages tell us that those very companies are making huge losses in their various quests for the elusive "fast-buck" record.

Television commercials are mainly tedious but occasionally they are genuinely humorous. And on rarer occasions, they are pertinent, telling. There is one which projects a well-known chocolate biscuit which hits the nail so exactly on the head it accurately sums up the popular music scene of today. No doubt you have seen it: four anxious spiky-haired youngsters are playing their "new recording" to an executive. When asked what he thinks of it he says:

> "You can't sing, you can't play - and you look AWFUL.....(a pregnant pause) ...YOU'LL GO A LONG WAY!"

This must sum up the scene in a nutshell - in, possibly, a way volumes couldn't do.

Even so, we think Crosby albums WILL still find a ready and profitable market. They will not, however, if the companies issue them in a furtive manner (BING SINGS BROADWAY)was a classic example) as if they were really to be kept secret! And sgain, in the last analysis, as we've found out so often, so much depends on whether or not your local retailer feels he can accept material which is outside the "Top Ten" !

Now to real business...

(Cont.

THE CHRONOLOGICAL BING CROSBY VOLUME 5

1928

JONZO RECORDS JZ - 5

JONZO RECORDS, PO Box 212, HARROW, MIDD'X. HA3 7LD

Titles are as follows; all were recorded in 1928 in New York. The elegant double-sleeve - as for the previous four issues Vols 1-4 - gives a mass of detail including composers and the original 78rpm record catalogue number:

SIDE 1:

1. Dancing Shadows. (Chorus with Al Rinker, Charles Gaylord and Austin Young.)
2. Louisiana (Take 1) (Bing solo backed with humming group.)
3. Louisiana (Take 3) -do-
4. Grieving (Bing, Al Rinker, Jack Fulton, and Charles Gaylord)
5. Do I hear you saying? (I love you) (Chorus with Al Rinker & Charles Gaylord)
6. You took advantage of me (Bing solo with humming group)
7. La Paloma (The dove) (Take 2) (previously unissued) controversial vocal.

SIDE 2:

1. La Golondrina (The Swallow) (humming vocal)
2. C-O-N-S-T-A-N-T-I-N-O-P-L-E (Take 2)
3. -d- (Take 3)
4. La Paloma (The Dove) (Take 6)
5. Evening star (Bing part solo with small vocal group)
6. Get out and get under the moon (Bing solo with group)

It is necessary to read the sleeve notes (again by COLIN PUGH) to fully appreciate these recordings, their part in Bing's history - and indeed, Bing's contribution.

Members, except the very newest, are now very familiar with this remarkable project of issuing on LP records Bing's entire recording output, from 1926 to 1977, forsooth. Volume 5 relentlessly follows this concept and it will be seen that with five volumes completed and issued we are still dealing with 1928.

> It would be foolish to deny that many members, while welcoming and applauding the concept and the people behind it find this early 'grass-roots' material just a little tedious. This is particularly so in the case of recordings that are included about which the experts still argue as to whether or not Bing was indeed "on the session".

But, The Chronological Bing must, if it is to match that description, include such items. To avoid them would immediately place the claim in jeopardy. To the truly dedicated, of course, these issues are meat and drink. But even they will be delighted when, say, 1931 is reached !

Meanwhile, here is another instalment of the emerging Bing with the greatest band of its time, despite what latter-day critics with hind-sight may say - and incidentally, the quality sleeve already mentioned also contains details of the probable personnel of the Whiteman band at the time. Perusal of the names is sufficient to justify Whiteman's place in music history - "An Everest among bandleaders" was Bing's assessment of Paul Whiteman many years after his own sojourn with the illustrious outfit.

> The producer, too, is coming up with some remarkable pictures to adorn the sleeves! The current one has a photograph of Bing on a pale grey background. Bing looks about 15; he is wearing a neat tweed suit, complete with waistcoat - and an enormous flat cap! In fact, he looks just as a young collier might look on a day out at Blackpool - and no disrespect is remotely intended either to colliers, Blackpool, or flat caps. And we are talking about fashions of 60 or more years ago. And Wakes' Week!

Needless to say, perhaps, the quality of the transfers is as startling as on the previous four volumes. John R. T. Davies in charge of this side is using some remarkable techniques.

If you can obtain the record locally the price should be £5.75. If you have to resort to mail at the address given in the heading, the price is £7.25 - the quality of the packing is on a par with the sleeve and its contents.

BING CROSBY IN THE THIRTIES : VOL 2

JSP RECORDS
1084

WITH JOHN SCOTT TROTTER & HIS ORCHESTRA.

Full advance details of this highly attractive album were given in the December (1985) issue of BING. It offers an illuminating contrast to the album we discussed above but as in the case of THE CHRONOLOGICAL BING CROSBY this forms part of the fascinating - even incredible - career of Bing. It is ten years hence - the 1938 glorious, glorious voice of the maturing, established, peerless Bing singing at his best in the Kraft Music Hall. Not now a comparatively insignificant cog in the mighty Whiteman machine but a worldwide, loved and respected singer, respected, be it noted, not just by teenagers, men, women, children but by everyone. His appeal universal. Not a singer for the kids to adore to the outrage of their parents - and their grandparents - but a singer, now also a well-entrenched star of the cinema screen, known in the friendliest fashion to all as BING! His fame and appeal had spread far beyond America.

The presiding maestro is John Scott Trotter and not, of course, Paul Whiteman. Whiteman days had long gone, though at that time, JST was on the campus of a university, about to join the band as pianist/arranger to Hal Kemp from which he graduated to the Crosby menage and to form perhaps the best-known combination in popular music history; the legend on hundreds of gramophone records:

BING CROSBY
(with JOHN SCOTT TROTTER
& his Orchestra)

(Cont....

If we appear to be waxing lyrical over this album - well, we do tend that way with the 1937 Bing! In our advance notice of this we said that the producers felt that the quality of reproduction equalled that of commercial issues of the period. They took us to task over this, maintaining they said "some" of the tracks reached that standard. Be that as it may the point is somewhat irrelevant seeing that the quality is very good throughout. Especially so when it is known they come from flaking, ancient, acetates which gathered cob-webs and dust in the JST garage for many, many years. Much work, we gather, has been done to get the tracks to the standard heard on this album.

> Which brings us to the indubitable fact that much of the album has already appeared on Spokane and Broadway (both US independents) within the past couple of years. Two points, however, are in favour of this latest JSP issue: firstly, the two American labels named were not easily obtainable here for most members, and secondly, the quality is improved.

A remarkable coincidence - we are sure there was no collusion! - is in the front sleeve picture on this album; on a light blue background, Bing is shewn in a photograph lying prone on an old-fashioned sofa, full-length, reading a boc AND WEARING A HUGE FLAT CAP! It is some years later than the picture on the JONZO album and Bing looks somewhere in his early 20's. Could it have been taken in the Crosby homestead before Bing went off for his show-business career? We don't know but its a photograph we haven't seen before - as is the other one. So, they are turning up some rare pictures to go with the rare tracks.

Although the titles were printed in the last issue of BING, for the sake of conciseness here they are again:

Side A:

1. Marie
2. The folks who live on the hill
3. When you wore a tulip
4. If its the last thing I do
5. The moon got in my eyes.
6. I don't want to get well.
7. There's a girl in the heart of Maryland
8. Can I forget you?
9. I still love to kiss you Goodnight
10. When you dream about Hawaii.

Side B:

1. If its the last thing I do
2. Once in a while
3. The lonesome road
4. Sweet stranger
5. Swingin' down the lane
6. She's tall, she's tan, she's terrific
7. Once in a while
8. That old feeling
9. Rosalie
10. Remember me (with Constance Bennett)

Track 1 from broadcast of 28th Oct 1937.
Tracks 2 & 3 from 4th Nov. 1937
Tracks 4, 5 & 6 from 11th Nov.1937
Tracks 7 & 8 from 18th Nov. 1937
Tracks 9 & 10 from 25th Nov. 1937

Tracks 1, 2 & 3 from 2nd Dec. 1937
Tracks 4 & 5 from 16th Dec. 1937
Track 6 from 23rd Dec. 1937
Tracks 7 & 8 from 30th Dec. 1937
Tracks 9 & 10 from 6th Jan. 1938

The sleeve notes are by ex-Decca Crosby expert GEOFF. MILNE who sees fit to add an important "Personal aside" to the effect that he is not in agreement with the duplication of titles from broadcasts when the arrangement is substantially the same. This is a view with which we personally entirely agree but we cannot recall such a disclaimer on a record sleeve before. Seems an extremely fair and frank attitude on the part of the producers. It will be recalled from the last issue of BING that views on that subject were invited by Derek Parkes

This is a praiseworthy effort to provide what the customer wants; the main notes are, as always by Geoff, very readable, dealing as they do with Bing's hectic schedule in the 30's as well as the musical content of the album. In particular he calls attention to the guitar of Perry Botkin and the trumpet of Andry Secrest in THE LONESOME ROAD and instrumentalism is a subject we return to in the "other matters" we mentioned.

ONCE IN A WHILE is a song that has a strange part in the Crosby career. In 1937 and early 1938 it was a big hit; all the bands and singers were performing it. Indeed, its still popular today and might well be termed a "standard". But, while Bing sang it on the radio several times (there are two versions on this album as you can see) and appeared to like the song, he didn't record it commercially (another subject we return to later) - not until 1977 when, in fact, it was probably the last song he ever recorded. It thus attains a special poignancy.

REMEMBER ME is humorous for Constance Bennett drags Bing into a key wholly unsuitable for him - and he makes the most of it in his usual engaging fashion. Constance, younger members may like to know, was a more prominent sister of Joan Bennett, who appeared with Bing in the famed MISSISSIPPI. I believe there was a third sister in films too, but cannot now recall her name.

THAT OLD FEELING version is not too well-known; in this Bing fluffs up the lyric - much to the amusement of the radio studio audience.

> Despite Bing's colossal record output we often indulge in the rather futile exercise of saying "Why didn't Bing record....." I would certainly ask that question in regard to IF ITS THE LAST THING I DO. An excellent, tuneful, ballad if the lyric is a dramatic overstatement! I am convinced that had Bing recorded this it would certainly be numbered a CROSBY CLASSIC. Again, there are two versions of this song on the album under discussion. Both are splendid.

That curiously neglected song, CAN I FORGET YOU? is here. There's one thing that does jar me on this album and that is the extremely odd guitar in WHEN YOU DREAM ABOUT HAWAII. I suppose this too was Perry Botkin, but for once he didn't get very musical!

However, its a grand album and we sincerely hope Derek Parkes and his producers are encouraged to a third volume.

> Most unusually, this album together with Volume I, turned up in a local record shop - almost unheard of event! And note this: the price of each is £5.49p! If it hasn't turned up in your local shops you are in luck for it can be obtained from DEREK PARKES, 66 Firs Rd., Winterslow, Salisbury, Wilts, SP5 1SW for £4.00 post paid.

But that cap! Would easily serve as an umbrella !

TRACK EVENTS RELATED! Here is the first of them; we received the following letter quite recently:

> "I am afraid I am quite bemused by the opinion of those members who state a preference for Bing's radio recordings to his studio recordings as, quite honestly, I do not think there is any comparison quality-wise. Surely in the day's of Bing's radio shows he would never have thought that some day those numbers would eventually appear on record and, therefore, they were only one-off efforts, not to be too fussy about, whereas when he got to the studios he knew that the finished product was going to be listened to and enjoyed over and over again and therefore a little more care was taken.
>
> I have numerous tapes and albums of radio material and to be quite honest I feel at times they detract from my great enjoyment of the commercial issues, especially where the applause has not been deleted, so much so that since purchasing BING IN THE 30'S VOL I (which incidentally is retailing for £5.70 here) I have decided not to purchase any further radio material and keep my fingers crossed for more Decca reissues. I do not include the Buddy Cole tracks in this assessment of course, which we know Bing went into the studio to record for radio output later on."

Well now, here's room for an amicable exchange of views! As one of those who sometimes feels Bing sang certainsongs better on radio than the commercial issue (not all of them, by any means) I would say the writer couldn't be more wrong in his view of Bing's radio singing.

Radio was probably on a par in importance to Bing's career as gramophone records. As we know, American radio was paid for by large, prosperous, firms who nevertheless kept an astute eye on listener-research figures - and soon withdraw their sponsorship on any decline in the listening-audience. And this would spell disaster! It is a quite false, even unthinkable, premise that Bing would "not be too fussy" about his broadcasts. The reverse in fact - remember what happened when his first taped shows were on the air! Oh no, that just cannot be accepted.

> There is another very valid and important aspect: Bing, like any other artist, would warm to, respond to, an audience and thus produce better results. Compare this to going into a cold, cheerless recording studio at 8 am - which is what Bing often did, because of filming, not to mention golfing, commitments later in the day!

It is true Bing could have had no idea his broadcasts would be refurbished 50 years on; and thereby lies another important aspect. The material the writer above refers to IS virtually 50 years old! It has, as we all now know, been miraculously preserved in a fashion stranger perhaps than fiction. It is a little unfair I feel to criticise such material. Isn't it enough that it exists in any fashion? Furthermore, it must be borne in mind that even these recordings that HAVE survived were not recorded in ideal conditions - years and years before tape recording. We gladly accept differing views but if the writer denies himself

radio material on record he will be denying himself some glorious Crosby singing! Later radio material, as the writer suggests, is in a different category again: the recent new album THE RADIO YEARS VOL I for instance, comes from a "tape-generation" source and is thus much better as regards quality. The Buddy Cole tracks it may be suggested were treated in much more 'less-fussy' fashion. True they were recorded under good studio conditions - but Bing always sounds informal (unlike KMH!) and also they are invariably so brief - often just the one chorus! Which was why, no doubt, Ken Barnes thought is necessary to dress them up!

But to forego Kraft Music Hall tracks? Never for me ! We need them, warts and all, if need be !

AND: THE CATEGORIES OF BING'S RECORDINGS

It does seem fair to assess such recordings under four, possibly five headings, viz:

(1) "Vocal Refrain" Recordings: These, of course, are those with Whiteman, Arnheim, Sam Lanin and a few others, and naturally come at the start of Bing's career. Referring back to Geoff. Milne's notes on some of the instrumental passages on the JSP album, for those who missed the years of the dance-bands (more often referred to these days as "big-bands") because they had ended by the time they took an interest, the Whiteman records could open up a new field of interest. Such records - and there were thousands by many, many, bands - are worth studying if only because of the skill that went into the arranging of even a fairly simple song. A band of anything from, say, ten to thirty instrumentalists, needed carefully thought-out scores to make them attractive, to mould in the brass, reed, and rhythm sections. It can be a fascinating exercise to listen and try and understand how the arranger went about this task. COLIN PUGH on the CHRONOLOGICAL album, and Geoff. Milne on the BING IN THE 30's Vols. both draw attention to this aspect.

Such recordings were tailored for dancing and/or listening enjoyment. The "vocal refrain" was merely a part of the arrangement - possibly included in the early days because the publisher wanted the lyrics known! For Bing, of course, it was a stepping stone (as well as a great apprenticeship) to a much wider career. Others followed - Como and Sinatra being prime examples.

(2) Commercial recordings: The records that were classified in the gramophone company's index as "VOCAL - POPULAR". Still arranged skillfully but with obviously a different angle from Category 1 above - styled and arranged to complement the solo vocalist. The arrangement had an introduction, or obligato, bridge passages, perhaps an orchestral chorus, then a finale. The whole, complete, thing tailored to an approximate three minutes to fit a 78rpm ten-inch shellac record. Naturally, some went over that time and some the other way. And these were made in their hundreds by Bing for Decca mainly under the Brunswick label here tho' other labels came into the picture, especially after 1954. Musical directors/accompanists to Bing run into over a hundred, but the overwhelming majority of his recordings were with John Scott Trotter's orchestra. These may well be termed pukka, authentic, gramophone records.

(Cont.

(3) Radio recordings: A large number of Bing's broadcasts were recorded for various reasons - time-scale differences coast-to-coast in the States, for John Scott's personal reference in connection with his arranging for Bing, and of course, when domestic tape-recorders came into the picture. Indeed, at times one finds oneself wondering if every time Bing opened his mouth someone popped a microphone in front of him for 'private party' recordings exist (and have been issued!) include parodies and fluffs. The two major items however were the discovery of the KMH acetates and Bing's own insistence on taping his radio programmes when the facility became available.

This section might be enlarged so as to confine it two three categories by including film-soundtrack recordings, TV recordings and even 'live' stage performances. It is worth noting that Bing's recordings for Decca (Brunswick) were entirely separate from most film soundtracks - tho' it will be pointed out that the songs from HIGH SOCIETY and perhaps others make exceptions to the general rule.

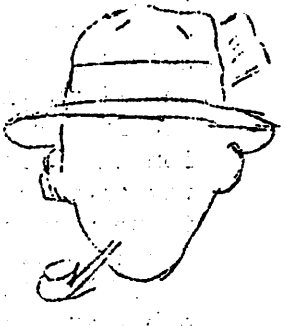
And many of these in this category have now appeared on records - LPs. Indeed, they have proliferated to a remarkable extent; but issue as gramophone records was never the original intention, or reason for the recording. As we have many times observed, this is a problem that bedevils discographic researchers.

We had got to this stage - virtually in conclusion - when by a most remarkable coincidence we received a welcome contribution from none other than:

COLIN PUGH, who wrote as follows: -

> I write concerning your reproduction of Lucien Rimbout's letter on page 44 of BING No.77. I entirely sympathise with his perplexity in finding records containing titles not listed in BING - JUST FOR THE RECORD, and unfortunately your explanation under 'Editor' can only have served to make him more mystified than ever. Briefly, you explained it by saying that the records to which he referred contained tracks edited from radio programmes, whereas the BING - JUST FOR THE RECORD discography only covered Bing's "commercial records". Unfortunately, this is not strictly accurate.
>
> Record issues have appeared containing tracks edited from the following sources:
>
> Radio broadcasts
> Television broadcasts.
> Film soundtracks
> Stage shows
> Private recordings
> Impromptu vocals.

BING - JUST FOR THE RECORD, includes no less than 58 titles edited from one or more of the above sources, and I am not including the host of titles from the London Palladium recordings which were recorded simultaneously with the stage show and are therefore 'commercial recordings'. Its this evocative word 'commercial'



that appears to be the stumbling block. Let's see what the word means. Its an 'interchange of merchandise' or 'trade' - no mention, you'll notice, of profit. If I produce some records costing me £5 each and either because I am a poor business man or I wish to cut my losses, I sell them at £3 each, that is still 'commerce'. I must give them away to be otherwise. Next, let us study just what is receiving the appellation 'commercial'. When Bing walked into a recording studio he was 'trading' his time and talent for remuneration. This, therefore, was a "commercial recording", regardless of whether or not records were issued as a result. If later, someone takes some of the songs Bing sang on radio and makes up an album to sell to a second party, that becomes a 'commercial record'. So, whichever way you look at it, either the 'recording' or the 'record' is commercial.

Returning to Lucien, he is quite right when he expected to find titles in a Discography that appear on disc, subject of course to the date of the disc being prior to the date of the discography. Now, a discographer is quite entitled to limit his work, as with BING - JUST FOR THE RECORD. On a fly-leaf it states: "The complete Encyclopedia of Commercial Recordings 1926-1977". Its a sprinkling of commercial records were included if it was not the intention to include them all. Hence Lucien's incomprehension. I drew attention to the subtle difference between the words "recording" and "record" on page 111 of my book: THE ALTERNATE BING CROSBY.

In a well-advanced stage of preparation is a publication that will be eagerly sought after by most collectors. It is a BING CROSBY SONGOGRAPHY which will detail every song Bing sang in all media. Depending on its final format, this may well be just the reference book required for a compiler to produce a comprehensive discography.

Finally, apropos the current spate of 'small company' and 'individual' redord issues, carrying mostly (or all) Bing tracks from sources other than recording studios. I understand your hesitation to review these issues with so many members not being in a position to acquire them but would suggest you consider the following. I think it must now be realised that with very few exceptions, and those mainly from Japan which are equally difficult to obtain, we must resign ourselves to the fact that no major record company is any longer interested in providing Bing albums - even those companies which still have unreleased material. This being so, all we have lft are the 'minor' issues which often come from collectors themselves. Now it must be said that the quality of issues is improving to such an extent that in many cases they are better than the larger companies' issues. So we have the situation where large companies cannot make a Bing album pay anymore, whereas small companies are prepared to issue albums at little over cost price and even risking a loss. I say give these people our full support (which includes spotlighting their issues in all Bing publications) so that we may at least continue to en-

joy the results of their labours, most material never before on records. The alternative to this is - nothing - for either ourselves or for attracting the younger members. If we do not do this now Bing's voice will surely have started to die. Moreover, we must try and talk the major companies out of their "we can't make it pay so no one will have it" attitude so that they pass their material over to small people who can issue it. They may have a legal right to it but morally this attitude is degenerate. The more publicity and support these minor issues receive, the larger the quantity of each issue they can have pressed, in turn making it easier for the smaller collector to acquire."

Editor: Splendid to have such a contribution from Colin; we might slyly add its - pity we don't get more of them! So many dedicated and knowledgeable collectors could write for us - but, alas, they appear to wait until there is something to criticise. That also might reasonably be considered degenerate.

There's a snag, however, to such a contribution: it calls for a lengthy reply! But firstly, we agree wholeheartedly with Colin's concluding paragraphs on the 'minor' or independent issues. Unfortunately, Colin doesn't know - and cannot be expected to know - the full situation. It is plain that we give maximum publicity to such issues as JONZO, JSP, Spokane, Broadway and so on, even tho' we are painfully aware these serve to irritate a lot of members who are not of an age, or in a financial position, to send to America, or Japan, or Germany. But we have accepted that most people want to know even though they cannot hope to get the albums.

> But what of those who invite me, the Editor, to participate in a scheme whereby a limited number, say 100, or 150, or even 200, albums are going to be pressed, and sold to specially selected persons? And this coupled with a request that it NOT be publicised? I understand this: pressing albums is a risky financialbusiness, and fear of legal repercussions over copyright intrude. But what of MY dilemma? Do I join the 'secret enclave' - and keep 'mum' as far as our readership is concerned? It should have been apparent that where there is a reasonable chance of members obtaining the albums, we help all we can with addresses, prices, &c.

And I most certainly applaud and encourage (admire!) the courage and initiative of those who are making these issues and hope, as Colin says, their success grows to the benefit of all. Before proceeding to other points in Colin's article we might say we recall reading many times in the 60's that Bing's records didn't sell any more - Bing himself was wont to declare this. But they did - including some splendid, large, sets, e.g. THE BEST OF BING, THE VERY BEST OF BING, BING SINGS AGAIN, not to mention the 'solo' albums - or the 1976-7 revival! Secondly, as each year thro' the 80's proceeds, and especially since 1982, so much of the original Bing is being freedby time-expiry of copyright restrictions. Other big record companies who do NOT presently hold Crosby material, but specialise in nostalgia, might easily decide to venture into the market. For Bing, of course.

Now to other points raised by Colin. We do not accept at all that we in any way further 'mystified' Lucien Rimbout regarding titles he expected to find in BING - JUST FOR THE RECORD. It would be audacious, if not downright dangerous, to cross swords with Colin on the matter, but despite the lesson on pedantry regarding the dictionary meaning of "commercial" - unnecessary we feel certain to 99.9 per cent of our members - as an eminent researcher/discographer he is well aware that "commercial" has a special, qualified, interpretation in the record-research world as opposed to the dictionary meaning.

Citing 58 titles from BING - JUST FOR THE RECORD out of 2,000 plus hardly proves a point, especially as the Buddy Cole tracks, original or 'doctored' were the subject of special negotiation between Crosby Enterprises, the broadcasting authority concerned, Ken Barnes and others. The result was that they were - in either case - original or treated - regarded as eminently suitable for "commercial" issue, even tho' many of them suffered on account of undue brevity. NEW TRICKS for example. The tracks were, in effect,'upgraded' to commercial issues.

The LIVE AT THE PALLADIUM double-issue, it must be conceded, is also an exception to the general rule accepted in discographical circles. Even so, it was planned as a record issue. The fact that records were made and sold as opposed to giving them away doesn't, in our view, make them commercial issues.

> Could it be accepted that the scores of songs Bing sang (most attractively) on KMH which started with a tinkle from the celeste (or some similar instrument) would be acceptable as pukka, large-company, issues? I think not. They are fascinating and highly desirable to our fraternity, naturally, but a distinction must be drawn.

However, this merely illustrates that this is a vexed question which will continue to bedevil compilers and researchers. Except for the radio items dealt with above, negotiated and issued as 'commercial' records, I feel any discography, while perhaps including the radio/TV/'private'/parody material should be kept separate - an entirely separate entity.

There is one further little footnote I might add: In the LPography, now nearly 10 years old, included for completeness were two albums issued by my predecessor as by THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE.

I STILL GET ENQUIRIES AS TO WHERE THESE CAN BE OBTAINED!

Coincidence comes into things again! Here is another controversial letter:

> "Just thought I'd comment on COLIN PUGH'S "ALTERNATE TAKE" booklet. I bought this a few years ago. I was really looking forward to reading this because, as far as I know, nothing had ever been attempted like it before. Well, I certainly have mixed feelings about it. Obviously a lot of research has gone into it and it seems to do a good job of listing the alternate takes and explaining the differences. Unfortunately it does not list the sources of these takes (78s, LPs, test pressings, unreleased takes etc.) This I must confess I do not understand. I do not buy Colin's reasoning that the booklet is not a discography and that therefore he doesn't have to list the sources of alternate takes though I agree it would be

foolish to list every source of each alternate take. However, in my view, it would be reasonable to at least list the most obvious souces for each alternate take. After all, the majorkty of purchasers of Colin's book are Crosby collectors. I do put myself in this category and I like to know where I can find these alternate takes if they are available.

I honestly believe that Colin Pugh has done the Crosby collector a great disservice by not listing the most obvious sources. I have complained to him but since he chooses not to reply to my letter I feel free to criticise the booklet. To me, its like buying half a loaf of bread. Its certainly better than no loaf but there is simply no excuse not to inform the Crosby fan where these alternate takes are, if they are available or not. My only conclusion is that Colin is keeping the information to himself. For what reasons I don't know. Well, there, I've gotten it off my chest. I don't like writing this letter but I see a bad situation here and I think it ought to be corrected. What do you think?"

Editor: We'll not give the writer's name, but the "gotten" will give the clue that the letter came from America. What do we think? Well, we'd lean over backwards to be kind, tolerant, forbearing, even understanding, not that that is usually necessary; in this case, we've never received such an outrageous - if not preposterous - criticism before! AND That's the kindest way we can put it.

Alternate takes can be found anywhere - or nowhere. Its the luck of the draw. There never has been a time, not when 78s were the only records available and especially not now, when you could go into a record shop and say:

"I want Bing Crosby's record of TEMPTATION, Take A".

He would look at you askance, in total disbelief. One was never offered a choice of takes! The average collector only knows there are varying takes because diligent researchers have ascertained that there are - by examining records (it is etched into the shellac) and turning over scores and scores in secondhand/junk shops, AND, most important, by writing to the record companies for information - even by asking if the recording sheets for each session may be scrutinized! People like Fred Reynolds, Ralph Harding, Colin Pugh, Derek Parkes, the late Bob Roberts and Leslie Phythian and others. THE ROAD TO BING CROSBY does list alternate takes where known - and that covers all the COUNTRIES in which Crosby records were issued. And that information was the result of years of painstaking research - research the average collector wouldn't dream of undertaking. Colin Pugh's book was able to add substantially to the knowledge that was available at the time of THE ROAD TO BING CROSBY - and no doubt, if people persist in their 'take' research even more is likely to come to light.

"TAKE" IT - OR LEAVE IT!

Putting aside the "complaint" about Colin Pugh's 'take' analysis we might pursue the subject a little further even tho' we are aware we may have reached - perhaps passed - the point at which we cause irritation to some members! Then again, we have newer, younger, members to whom the subject may be new and might even prove as fascinating to them as it does to the diehard veterans of Crosby recording research. This writer (your Editor!) is not what might be termed a "take man"; but he readily appreciates that many are rivetted on this subject. A classic case possibly of the views of the Editor not necessarily being those of contributors/members - and vice-versa. This IS proving a near-contentious issue, isn't it! Radio v record performance, where or when 'takes', the quality of BING IN THE 30's Vol 2 - my goodness, I hope we all remain friends after thi .

I was saying - I am not a 'take' man. I fully accept and understand that when making records Bing almost certainly made several records, or takes, of the song in question. In fact, I would be surprised if he didn't. True he was much later dubbed "one-take Crosby" and in many cases lived up to that appellation, I doubt if it was the case early on - certainly up to the advent of tape and hence micro-groove recording. This technological development caused a radical change in the 'take' aspect, as Colin explains in his ALTERNATE BING CROSBY, enabling such activities as splicing, mixing, and goodness knows what else gimmickry with recordings - as opposed to records - another point Colin deals with. In fact, as we have been told, it is possible to cut out a single WORD and insert another these days. Witness "cloud" and "light" in Bing's performance of THE WAY WE WERE.

In the good old days (?), in Bing's hey-day in fact, the techniques were much more rigorous. Any slip, any fluff - and it all had to be done again. Any wonder that many 'takes' were needed? And even when a satisfactory 'take' was achieved, the subsequent esoteric process to get a "master" must have been a painful business. The cutting of the wax had to be transferred (distilled?) to a zinc plate through various baths and goodness knows what else.

> And those 'masters' had nothing like the permanence of magnetic tape. Take into consideration the thousand upon thousand of records that had to be stamped from that master and it is small wonder that they wanted to have duplicates, or near-duplicates, on hand. Otherwise Bing would have been brought back to the studio interminably to re-record the same song - not only Bing, of course, but all recording artists of the period.

And it is part of Bing's engaging and highly individual talent that he seemed incapable of singing a song twice (or more times) in exactly the same, mechanical, style. Hence the small variations he produced in his interpretations. Here we might interpolate a pertinent point in the radio v records opinions: Would Bing's records have sold in their millions in the 30's and 40's if he hadn't maintained a very high standard week after week on the radio? Its a fair question - and the answer is obvious.

here is a 'discographical note' on page 121 of BING - JUST FOR THE RECORD which says:

> "It has been reported that three 'takes' were recorded of each title between 4 May 1931 and 5 July 1934 but this has never been proved."

In view of what has been said immediately above, this is almost certainly true - and I would readily accept it as such. In fact, I would have expected this procedure to have extended well beyond 1934 - which happened, of course, to be the start of Bing's marathon Decca (Brunswick) recording stint, lasting 20 years no less.

Thus, if Bing sang "I LOVE YOU" or some such phrase all on one note, and then sang it again "I LOVE - YOU" with the 'you' dropped or raised a note, it leaves me comparatively unmoved - just as long as I have the performance of the song! It is not so with devotees and if such is part of the pleasure of Crosbyana - so be it. I certainly wouldn't quarrel with it.

DIFFERENT VERSIONS: Just in case the category of newer/younger members may be a little puzzled, we're not talking about different versions of certain songs. They will probably know that Bing made entirely different versions of his early 30's songs like PLEASE, MILLION-DOLLAR BABY, BLUE OF THE NIGHT, STARDUST and others later on - 1939 or 1940 onwards.

But this leads to an interesting exception to my views on 'takes' - there's always an exception, perhaps! Even tho' they might prove the rule. This is in regard to the two 'takes' of MR. GALLAGHER & MR. SHEAN" that have appeared on issues, though I believe the A take has appeared only on a solitary LP (Ace of Hearts (Decca) AMONG MY SOUVENIRS AH90) and this thro' the agency of Geoff. Milne who specially catered for Crosby collectors.

> Here the differences are so marked between the A and B performances as to amount to a different performance. The highly stylised effort is quite remarkable and if Bing, Johnny Mercer and Jimmy Dorsey and his orchestra played it a hundred times its doubtful if any two would be identical! The ad-libbing, scat-singing, indeed, the repartee would preclude this.

For my money, the B version is infinitely preferable to the A and its fairly easy to see why this was made the general issue. No concurrent listening is necessary here, or head-sets, slowing-down &c. But both versions are virtuosi performances.

We've referred to issues A and B but note that THE ROAD TO BING CROSBY lists A and E! Must be a story behind this!

To return to more normal TRACK EVENTS:

doubt if anyone is keeping tally now on the sales of Bing's WHITE CHRISTMAS. The figure seems to have settled on around 30-million. In fact, there were no less than five separate issues of this No. 1. Christmas song for the season of 1985, and the issues are so varied what with the changing hands of the authorities, e.g. From Decca, to Decca/MCA, to MCA/EMI it is much too complicated even if anyone wanted to bother. The December BING was posted just a few days early - deliberately in an

effort to get it to you before the main postal rush - to catch most of the issues, apart from the annual WHITE CHRISTMAS on Mmsic for Pleasure, which we did note. Additionally, we have information of WHITE CHRISTMAS by Bing on:

(1) SANTA CLAUS HITS: Atlantic Gap SGH 1: WHITE CHRISTMAS/PEACE ON EARTH/LITTLE DRUMMER BOY (last two with Dave Bowie)

(2) THE CHRISTMAS ALBUM: (That's what I call music'series) EMI NOX 1

WHITE CHRISTMAS - rest non-Bing, mainly modern 'pop' performers.

(3) THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF CHRISTMAS: WHITE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY HDY 1929

This is a curious album; it is dated 1981 though we have no knowledge of it previously. One doesn't have to worry whether or not it is the 1942 or 1947 version by Bing - its neither! It must, therefore, be either a radio or a TV versic. though no applause is there and there appears to be no abrupt cut-off as if stifling applause. Rather a mystery. Rest of the album, too, is a curious mixture of British and American artists, giz Mantovani, Ronnie Aldrich, Vic Damone and others.

(4) PICTURE-DISC MCA BING P1: WHITE CHRISTMAS/SILENT NIGHT/CHRISTMAS IN KILLARNEY.

(5) As above (4) but without picture and with special sleeve. (We haven't seen this).

Then, belatedly, we heard about:

BING CROSBY: CHRISTMAS CLASSICS. CAPITOL No. X CAP 260721

We were commenting in BING during 1985 how unfortunate it was that the I WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS album by - originally - Warner had never been reissued except as a "bonus" record with a couple of collections. Seems it was issued under the Capitol aegis and was around (tho' not here in South Wales!) for last Christmas. Yet it was dated 1977 so one must ponder where it has been since then? Be that as it may, many members were delighted to acquire this highly-regarded Christmas album by Bing, so neglected as compared with the perennial WHITE CHRISTMAS - and containing as it does what many consider to be Bing's finest 'Christmas' rendering - O HOLY NIGHT.

This was a very important reissue of great interest to Crosby admirers for it has been most sought after since the 1962 Warner issue. Yet it appears to have been smuggled into the shops - here and there - with no promotion whatever.

To add to the confusion, I was delighted to receive as a Christmas greeting from our good friend RON DANIELS in South Australia, a pukka pre-recorded cassette of this album! Not a dubbing but a genuine "commercial" (there's that word again!) issue with fully documented, illustrated, printed jacket.

The number of this was AXIS - TC-AX-260300 but the jacket also carries a note "This Compilation Capitol Records 1977" and its probably an Australian only issue. Its most attractive with a small picture of lighted candles and flowers, and an even smaller inset picture of Bing.

For the precise-minded the titles on both the record and the cassette are:

Side 1:

Winter Wonderland
Have yourself a merry little Christmas
What child is this?
The holly and the ivy
The Little Drummer boy
O, Holy night.

Side 2:

Let is snow! Let is snow! Let is snow!
Hark! the herald angels sing
It came upon a midnight clear
Frosty, the snowman
Pat-a-pan/While shepherds watched their sheep
I wish you a merry Christmas.

Many will have been delighted at the chance to obtain this album, which has Bing in very good voice indeed.

PHIL MORGAN (Newcastle-upon-Tyne) reports he picked up:

"WHITE CHRISTMAS" BLACK LION (HMV SHOP NEWCASTLE) £2.99

This contains two of Bing's Christmas radio shows, viz:

December 19, 1951 with Trudy Erwin and Lindsay as guests.

December 14, 1949 with Carole Richards and James Stewart.

Sleeve is dated 1982; this was reported at the time. Seems distributors hold on until next Christmas what they don't sell this - and very understandably so. Phil also obtained:

ALL-AMERICAN STARS (radio material) FIORETTI LABEL (Italian/French?)

Now is the hour: If you would ever ask me (with Peggy Lee), and
With the Moon in the sky (!) Rest non-Bing.

Playing the third track it turned out to be YOU DON'T HAVE TO KNOW THE LANGUAGE.

We've been asked if we ever mentioned the BOB HOPE IN HOLLYWOOD album US MCA - 906. Yes we did and said that it contained varying takes of Bing /Bob duets, which are:

Put it there, pal.
Road to Morocco
Road to Bali
Merry-go-run-around
Hoots mon
Chicago style.

Remainder of album non-Bing. DEREK PARKES enlarges on this album as follows: The quality of the whole record is remarkable, and technically it is of great interest for a note on the sleeve states that from 1943 to 1949 Decca, in addition to their normal recordings, made back-up recordings of the entire recording session on 16-inch glass-base acetate discs - presumably coarse groove, not micro-groove. And from this source have arisen the varying takes - PUT IT THERE, PAL (L3686-T) and ROAD TO MOROCCO (L3687-T) The T presumably stands for transcription.

The latter song is especially interesting as Bing partially breaks up with a slight chuckle, followed by Bob doing likewise and then Bing again - and I think I just heard a technician's voice come in slightly too soon as the whole thing ended

All of which goes to show what a daunting task lies ahead of the researchers ! This has turned out to be a "discographers" issue !

We hope the others are not too chagrined.....

With grateful acknowledgements to:

ST. ANDREWS - HOME OF GOLF

Only once has St. Andrews lost its dignity and its natural assumption that golf is all. The man who brought about this unprecedented lapse from tradition was, and still is, a confessed 'golf-maniac'. Yet when the whole town poured down to the first tee to watch him play in the 1950 Amateur Championship, it was not his golf that was the attraction, but the man himself, BING CROSBY, they had come to see.

There were some of the Championship organisers who were not too happy about his entry. Was he entering, bona fide, as a golfer?

Bing responded magnificently, and showed them that he was. In the only round he played he revealed a flash of that special magnetic gift of rising to the occasion. A cold wind was tearing in from the sea, but over 7,000 spectators, many of them from beyond the town, but still a goodly proportion of St. Andrean and R and A members, known for their single-mindedness for golf, were there.

The American film-star, then the consummate glamour personality to most of the world, was paired against local golfer, J. K. Wilson of the St. Andrews Club. Bing started off with a great winning 'birdie' at the first, halved the second in par and then won the 3rd with another great 'birdie'. The gallery was entranced. Crosby ultimately lost 3 and 2 to Wilson, but he had demonstrated to his thousands of 'fans' that he was, indeed, a golfer worthy of playing in the championship.

In such circumstances, St. Andrews excused itself for its lapse from dignity and its affront to the royal and ancient game in placing a mere film star even temporarily in higher esteem than a golfer. Incidentally, his opponent still bears in the town and alwways will, the nickname - "Bing" Wilson!

Editor: One of our members - in fact, a close neighbour of your Editor, is also a good friend of 'Bing' Wilson and was present on that momentous occasion in 1950. Indeed, Jim Ramsay, for that is his name, had actually been in touch with Bing and was going to be his caddy on his next visit. Sadly, Bing's death intervened.

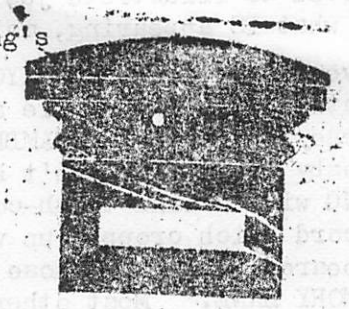
Subsequently, of course, Bing played many times at St. Andrews and on all the famous Scottish courses he so admired and loved. And, as we all know, became known as a golf-player of some calibre.

The above extract, already acknowledged with thanks, is from the book ST. ANDREWS, HOME OF GOLF.

EVERYONE WILL BE INTERESTED IN COLIN PUGH'S REFERENCE TO A "SONGOGRAPHY" OF BING : NEWS AS TO ITS COMPLETION AND AVAILABILITY WILL BE GIVEN JUST AS SOON AS WE KNOW.

YET ANOTHER PROJECT in preparation is an LP INDEX. As members co-operation is intended for this we will, again, give details as soon as they are released.

GIRVAN PATERSON, 6/23 Paddington Rd., Oakleigh, Victoria 3166,Australia:



BING

Letters

I was most fascinated by the article regarding Bing's commercial recordings that have never appeared on LP. According to the article a surprisingly low figure of just 178 have never been on 'official' LP releases, or just 66 if we deduct those that have been on 'private' LP issues. However, I'm sure you will get many letters of correction.

I'm no expert on the subject but I'm certain that EVERYWHERE YOU GO, GETTING TO KNOW YOU, SWINGING DOWN THE LANE have been on legit. LPs - the first and last on the 'Readers' Digest' set BING SINGS unless the article refers to different 'takes'. In that case the list would have to be much larger. Why is TOO-RAL-LOO-RAL-LOO-RAL on the 'never' list? It must be on every 'best of Bing' album ever released. We all know there are probably different takes to nearly every song Bing recorded, in many the differences are so slight as to really make no big deal. The fact is that even so much of the Crosby catalogue has been on legit LP at some stage, much of it was on early 10-inch albums and has been out of print probably as long as the 78 versions.

To me its tragic that the world's greatest recording star should be treated so shabbily today by the major companies that own rights to his legacy, when practically the entire output of other stars of the same era is readily available - people like Louis Armstrong, Fats Waller, Al Bowlly, Judy Garland and others. All great stars no doubt but surely they don't deserve more attention than Bing?

There's a campaign on for a Bing postage stamp. I'd much rather see one for getting Bing's work back in print - have you ever tried to play a postage stamp? All the best for the coming year....

Editor: Great; Girvan's letter is specially selected because it enables us to answer so many other correspondents. The stamp (in America) is to mark Bing's stature, to honour him. Oddly, there's currently a British series honouring British stars like Peter Sellers, Vivien Leigh and others.

Quoting the other artists as Girvan does may be a little irrelevant if only on account of the fact that their record output in quantity (or quality many will think) cannot be compared with Bing's. As we pointed out last time, whether or not they are still available, a very high proportion of Bing's recordings HAVE been on LP.

We too are a little surprised that TOO-RAL-LOO-RAL-LOO-RAL apeared in the never on LP list, especially as on page 14 of that same issue we gave it as our opinion that it was indeed the most reissued of all Bing's records! Perhaps the compilers will tell us how that happened?

We didn't get too much mail on the

REG BRISTO,
7 Greenmeadow Close,
C W M B R A N,
GWENT, NP44 4PJ

subject of corrections to the list; those that we did receive only served to illustrate just how difficult it is these days to keep track of what IS appearing, mainly on the 'private' or 'independent' albums.

Several mentioned THEN YOU'VE NEVER BEEN BLUE yet it was only recently that we listed a double album entitled SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY, a Tommy Dorsey selection on CAMBRA records (CR 5142) which contained this Crosby track. We don't know who scares us most: those who go thro' BING with a fine tooth-comb, or those who DON'T read it! Another record which cropped up was OH HOW I MISS YOU TONIGHT. Yet this too appeared on one of those long-ago 10-inch Brunswick albums, DOWN MEMORY LANE. Most others have been on the aforementioned hard-to-get albums. However, we'll be interested to hear from Michael Crampton and Frank Wilgaus, who were zealous enough to compile the listings if they have any comments.

BILL CHATFIELD, 37 Newton St., Olney, Bucks:

I had the good fortune at Christmas of adding to my collection A CHRISTMAS SING WITH BING AROUND THE WORLD. I sat listening and suddenly Bing was singing WHITE CHRISTMAS. Its a job for some people to put their feelings into words but I don't think I have ever heard Bing sing with so much feeling and sincerity. I have the record of WHITE CHRISTMAS - as issued - but to me there is no comparison with the way he sang it on the broadcast version. Perhaps it was the seasonal environment that inspired him because we all know how much Bing loved Christmas.

It seemed to me that Bing, ambassador that he was, was trying to send his own personal message of peace and goodwill to the far corners of the world. I don't know if any other members have commented on this but perhaps they have listened and just accepted that it was Bing. But to me, it was Bing that I had never heard before.

Editor: Bill had no difficulty in conveying his feelings, I think. But see page 23 of last issue!

MRS. GWEN HARVEY, 33 Canterbury Rd., Farnborough, Hants, GU14 6QP:

I really enjoyed Dick Baker's article on how he became a Bingaholic! I expect he is well aware of a little shop in Tunbridge Wells called SECOND SPIN. When I visit my son and his wife in Hadlow he always runs me to this tiny treasure-trove where I have picked up many a Bing Bargain. The proprietor is always very helpful. He has listed, by hand, the titles of all the 78s which are kept at the back for safety. He also keeps sheet-music, so all in all, its a delightful little place to peruse.

Editor: Hope we haven't spoiled things by blabbing about this little treasure-house!

BILL CHAPPELL, 49 Rowditch Lane, Battersea, London, SW11 5BX:

Liked the story of the search for DEEP PURPLE; this sort of thing has happened to most of us, I imagine. Can you give me any information on THE ROAD TO HOLLYWOOD? It was suggested in BING that it would be ready by late autumn of 1985. I duly sent my deposit. Has there been some delay?

Editor: To answer Bill and others, the last we heard was that the comprehensive index was still being worked on ¾ a laborious job. We will pass on news as and when we get it - but have no fears - when it comes it will have been worth waiting for!

JOHN LAWSON, 2 Curzon Aven., Wallasey, M'side, L45 5AX Regarding alternate 'takes', I find it disconcerting to listen to them, especially when they appear consecutively on the same LP. Its a little irritating to have to listen to three virtually identical versions of the same number, especially as it is going to take so long for THE CHRONOLOGICAL series to be completed. Still, a declared policy remains that and I am sure the diehard collectors thrive on it. And no doubt the viability of the albums is increased thereby. I am considerably less happy about almost identical versions of the same song appearing on radio extract albums.

Editor: John seems to have summed up the attitude over a wide spectrum, i.e. a series IS a series, and it will please the keen discographers (both of Bing and the Whiteman Orchestra). Slightly varying radio versions on the same album really a waste of playing-space! A study of mail shows this to be the consensus of opinion.

STAN HOBBS, 249 Kingsbridge Rd., Morden, Surrey, SM4 4PX:

My wife and I are so grateful to you for, as it were, introducing Sylvia (Crellin) to us that the only way I can really express my feelings was to put them in vierse. I mean every word. And its all due to you for your tireless efforts.

Editor: A word of explanation is needed here: Stan discovered thro' BING that a charming lady, SYLVIA CRELLIN, was a fairly close neighbour. Stan and his wife, Edie, sought out Sylvia and found her a cheerful, happy personality living with friends who have the same affliction - blindness. One can only be brutally blunt about these things, alas. But, they make light of it; Sylvia goes to work, as do her friends - and I too know from her letters, what a lovely girl she is. Whatever you think of verse in BING, one has to accept the sincerity of the following:

FRIENDSHIP:

We're knocking on my wife and I,
Losing friends, lives passing by.
We've made new friends, now days are bright,
Their sight's not good but their hearts are right,
No self pity - or bemoaning fate,
But sense of fun and lack of hate.
Their happy laughter and caring ways
Bring pleasure to our passing days.
Its friends like these that dispel fears
Of loneliness in later years.
They've never seen us, for they are blind
But trust our friendship, that's their kind.
We see them and thank him above
We can share our sight, and show some love.
Though our sight is different we both can hear
Bing's lovely voice - we hold that dear.
It was this gift that God gave Bing,
Brought us together to hear him sing.
Time passes by, Bing passed along,
But left the world his happy song.
And we hope to spend more precious hours,
Listening, with these friends of ours.
We only hope when we have gone,
We have left kind thoughts, for them to dwell upon.

TRADING POST

Entries here are free to members; insertions should be restricted to no more than six lines. If long lists are involved, invite a SAE. Advertisements for records, tapes, books, photos, etc.etc There IS a nominal charge of £1 for non-Crosby items. Please be specific in wording advertisements, e.g. make sure details incl. price are clear. Often we have to write to members to get details they have omitted! Waste of time and postage for them and us.

We sometimes do get long lists of records/nos, however. If we printed these BING would soon become nothing more than a Crosbyana catalogue, with no room for the features which the bulk of members want and expect.

It is for consideration whether or not there is a need for a SEPARATE publication which could be a "collectors' journal" in the literal sense. This could carry lists as long as necessary and be purely an ADVERTISING journal - there are one or two being published in the jazz sphere.

WE offer the suggestion to anyone who has the interest and enthusiasm to inaugurate such a publication and who has, of course, the means of producing such a publication. Charges would have to be made for the advertisements, of course, to finance the project. It may be worthy of consideration.

PETER MURRAY, 5/5Greendykes Drive, Edinburgh, EH16 4HL: I have the following for trade: BING CROSBY CHRISTMAS EVE PARTY 1956 from WBBM RADIO; BING CROSBY SHOW FROM TV 1959 (Jo Stafford, Jim Garner, Bing's sons,Dean Martin; BING CROSBY SHOW FROM TV 1960 w. Rosie Clooney, Johnny Mercer, Bing's sons; BING'S KMH AIRCHECKS 1937-1941-1943; BING CROSBY SHOW from TV 1958 w. Dean Martin, Pattie Page,Mahalia Jackson. Wants sent on enquiry. (This is what we mean: Peter doesn't say whether these are records or tapes).

BILL HUNTINGTON, 266 Westminster Rd., Morecambe, Lancs, LA3 1EP (Phone 0524-416144) The following sale items are all new and unplayed:
US READERS DIGEST "BING SINGS" 8-LP Boxed set Collectors Edition.
US READERS DIGEST "BING SINGS AGAIN" " " 8-LPs " "
JAP. MCA 9284-86 BING CROSBY - GREAT ENTERTAINER SERIES 3-LP set.boxed.
JAP. MCA DOUBLE ALBUM "SWEET MEMORIES OF BING"
Four sets - offers to Bill

BRIAN JONES, 1 Gelihaf Rd., Fleur-de-Lis, Blackwood, Gwent, NP2 1RJ: Boxed set BING - A MUSICAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY - 5 LPs boxed. Please send SAE in the first instance.

R.S. (BOB) JONES, 80 Beech St., Jarrow, Tyne & Wear NE32 5LD has a truly massive amount of Crosby (and other) material for sale, running into four foolscap pages of items, record of all kinds (LPs, EPs, 78s, sheet music pictures &c.) Almost every album is available: write with SAE for details.

DENNIS NUTT, 16 Coleshill Dr. Hartcliffe, Bristol, BS13 9QU: Does anyone have any cinema posters like we used to see - I want to decorate my Bing room. Assistance much appreciated.

NEIL ROBINSON, 19 Alder Grove, Stapenhill, Burton-on-Trent, DE15 9QR: I am seeking 78s still, especially the 041 series and the 047 series. These appear to be difficult to find, especially at record fairs. Can anyone help please?

DEREK PARKES, 66 First Rd., Winterslow, Salisbury, Wilts, SP5 1SW:

Boxed set of 6 commercial LPs (1929-early 30's) Mint condition, 60 titles, COLUMBIA SPECIAL PRODUCTS P6 14370 (USA). Offers over £15 invited (until 6 weeks after publication of BING) or £25 secures. Winner only notified unless SAE (Phone: 0980-862688)
(Again we have to say we're not sure but it is doubtful if this is a Crosby collection but more a general programme).

CLIFF BRISBOIS, 5699 Kanan Rd., Agoura, CA 91301, USA: Needs back issues of BING No. 1 to No. 74. Can you help complete his collection? He will pay you or trade for original and /or photo-copies.

Editor: Cliff is one very nice fella - but this amount could prove a very, very expensive exercise!)

JACK SOUTHER, 2011-44th Aven. San Francisco, Cal. 94116, USA: Has numerous out-of-print Bing records, all speeds for trade or disposal, commercial and non-commercial. WANTS: Compact Disc BING 'N BASIE - West Germany - EMARCY LABEL, POLYGRAM 824 702-2: ARIEL JKT 12 - A MUSICAL TRIBUTE TO JEROME KERN: SPANISH LP WEA 25-2292-1 HIGH TOR: JAPANESE MCA 7066 SWANEE RIVER and FRENCH MCA 204875 THERE'S NO BUSINESS LIKE SHOW BUSINESS.

When calling members' attention to the special peel-off CHRISTMAS stamps offered by THE NEW BING CROSBY COLOUR PHOTO CLUB regrettably we didn't make it clear that the cost of £1.40 plus 17p postage was for a strip of TWENTY stamps! ——————— The club now offers portrait peel-off stamps (head and shoulders colour picture of Bing) at the same rate, i.e. £1.40 + 17p for a STRIP of twenty most attractive stamps. These on envelopes and packages, it is felt, help to keep Bing prominent around the world - as well as making envelopes/packages attractive! FRANK MURPHY, club as above, 32 Ferndale Avenue, Wallsend, Tyne & Wear. (Size of stamps 1" x 1½")

BING-JUST FOR THE RECORD remains available from JOHN JOYCE, 21 Birchfield Gdns., Gateshead, Tyne & Wear, NE9 7TJ. This is the hardback volume listing ALL Bing's commercial recordings from 1926 to 1977 in both chronological AND alphabetical order, complete with musical-directors, vocal partners, and other details. Everyone reading this is a Crosby admirer and cannot afford to be without this book which costs just £3.50 post paid. Overseas prices: Europe £4.00 - US/Canada £4.00 surface mail, £6.00 airmail - remittances in sterling please to JOHN JOYCE ICC/A/C

BING ties in maroon or dark blue with the motif shewn ——> cost £3.50 plus 20p P & P from BAXTER'S BADGE CENTRE, 13 Ropergate, Pontefract, West Yorks, WF8 1LL. They tone with virtually any suit/outfit!

STAN WOODFORD, 6 Mariam Gdns., Hornchurch, Essex, RM12 6QA (Phone Hornchurch 45049) who many will know has supplied attractive videos of Bing songs from films (without wading thro' the plot!) has compiled two more - 2 hr. VHS 44 songs £10.00 inclusive, and 56 songs £12.50 incl. Regret cannot list the songs, it would break our "rule" ! But details from Stan on receipt of SAE.

REMEMBER! BE QUITE EXPLICIT WHEN COMPILING YOUR ENTRIES FOR "TRADING POST" in your own interests as well as ours!

FROM ALL QUARTERS

What was for an era THE CROSBY CLAMBAKE, or the Bing Crosby Pro-Am Golf tournament was held recently - and ended prematurely because of heavy rain - not a unusual occurrence, it seems. But this year it was THE AT & T PEBBLE BEACH PRO AM. You will remember that KATHRYN CROSBY had objections to the commercialisation of the tournament. We have received a sheaf of press cuttings from the States, all deploring the chan . Although Nathaniel and Harry were involved, LEE TREVINO was reported as saying: "The Crosby name must be restored to this tournament. I don't care if its the Crosby, the Nathaniel and Harry Crosby, or the Crosby-hyphenated-AT & T they've GOT to get the Crosby name back on this tournament. Apparently the public didn't support the event as they used to - not even on the days when the celebrities were playing. Nathaniel, as official host, and son of Kathryn Crosby, it was further reported, has been walking a thin line but now seems ready to take a stand - on restoring "Crosby" to the tournament.

> Mrs. Crosby has come in for harsh comment from some of the writers, who point out she is not backward in commercial exploitation of the name in other directions.

AUDREY COOPER (Carlton, Notts) sent us a delicious item from THE MAIL ON SUNDAY we would otherwise have missed. Big headlines proclaimed:

> A NEW TUNE FOR DYLAN FROM THE OLD GROANER and went on -
>
> "Sporting a torn T-shirt, black jeans, and motorcycle boots, Bob Dylan, now 44, is stirring again. He is in California hassling record companies, making a music video, and talking about his latest musical inspiration.
>
> There's nothing very surprising about any of this - except that his latest inspiration is the late BING CROSBY. "I don't think you can find better phrasing anywhere," says the Minnesota minstrel, whose jagged cries and wailing mouth-organ seem light years from Crosby's smooth, cheery, tones.
>
> Dylan sighs: "Sinatra, Peggy Lee - I love all these people. But I have been listening a lot lately to Bing Crosby, and I am thinking of recording one of his earlier songs.'

My God! Fame at last for Bing! Those who remember DYLAN will know his peculiar vocalising gave "singing" a new meaning; in fact, it would be difficult to describe it as singing. My daughter tells me he sang "protest " songs. We ought to do just that if he sings one of Bing's early songs !

A VIDEO OF THE FILM "WHITE CHRISTMAS", available in America, reached No. 3 in the States' best-selling lists, we are informed. Even in early February it was still in the lists at No. 20.

ALMA COGAN - WANTED - her LP "HOW ABOUT LOVE" Columbia 33 SX 1469 - Contact HARRY NOLAN, Spokane, 7 Saxon Rise, Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex, TN40 1TF or 'phone 0424 - 214312

WE ARE SADDENED to report the passing of LESLIE MYALL, of Farlington, Hants. Phil Clarke writes: Leslie, a close friend of many, and one of the founder-members of THE SOUTHERN BING CROSBY TRIBUTE CLUB, passed away in his sleep on Tuesday, 27th January. He had not been ill and his death was a shock. He will be sadly missed by all who knew him. His widow has asked me to dispose of his record collection (mostly LPs and books) to other members of the ICC preferably. Anyone interested should contact me, PHIL CLARKE, 21 Stockheath Lane, Havant, Hants, PO9 3BU stating LPs required and price you are willing to pay - enclose SAE please.

****

The fateful day for RENEE CHESTER is 7th March when she will depart for her new home in TENERIFE. Renee is disconsolate at leaving so many friends she has made in the Circle over nine years but we've assured her that she will not be at the ends of the earth and will be in touch. BING will reach her very shortly after UK members get their copies. Renee has been (and no doubt will continue to be) a most enthusiastic member, and many have benefitted from her efforts in the way of LPs, cassettes, and videos. For her many friends, the address now is:

27 G 11, Chayofita, Costa del Silencio, TENERIFE, Canary Islands.

****

KEN CROSSLAND is another of our "on the move" members who would like his friends to know his new address, which is:

7 Wheatcroft View, Landmere Court, West Bridgford, Nottingham, NG2 7PE

We feel Ken had a certain regret at his move for he found a measure of satisfaction in residing in BINGLEY, Nottingham !

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THE NEXT SOCIAL EVENT IN THE NORTH-EAST, Phil Morgan reports, WILL BE ON FRIDAY 9th MAY at the usual venue, FIVE BRIDGES HOTEL (Washington Suite), Gateshead. Cost of the evening is £5.50 which includes a 3-course meal. Tickets obtainable from the organiser, JOHN JOYCE, 21 Birchfield Gardens, GATESHEAD, Tyne & Wear, NE9 7TJ (Tel: 0632 - 487861) Overnight accommodation, bed & breakfast, can be arranged at the hotel at a cost of £10.50p. An excellent social evening is assured - so please BOOK AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE!

****

Without wishing to add to our already overburdened range of activities by setting up as a holiday bureau, RON NEWTON, 50 Stonedale, Sutton Hill, Telford, Shrops. TF7 4AL - apropos Renee Chester's move above - tells us he has a two-week time-share apartment in Majorca in November if anyone is interested. Drop him a line for details.

****

A fugitive note from our overloaded TRACK EVENTS: With the issue of the BING 'N BASIE album on compact disc, Bing's voice enters the very latest technology in sound-reproduction. The price, however, is unlikely to cause a stampede, for it costs a staggering £11.49. And you will require a suitable player costing anything between £250 and £400. Most will wait and see what else of Bing turns up on C-D; even then, its an expensive proposition. For those who like to know the number is IMS 824 7052 EMARCY. The selection is undoubtedly out to woo the Basie fans, too.

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Renee insists she will be back for 'Leeds' in 1987 if not this year.....

IT STARTED WITH A BING

Del Mar Track Has Retained Pleasant Setting and Theme While Undergoing Years of Change

Where the turf meets the surf, that's the place to go,
Take a plane, take a train, take a car.
There's a smile on each face, where the turf meets the surf -
At Del Mar.

Del Mar Theme Song.

BY BILL SHIRLEY.
Times Staff Writer.

DEL MAR--- On a recent Sunday afternoon in North San Diego County, a winning combination of thoroughbred racing and splendid weather attracted almost as many people to the Del Mar Thoroughbred Club as the beaches of this resort town.

The spectators crowding an area in front of the grandstand and milling in the infield of this seaside track in fact, looked a little like a beach crowd and a lot like a bunch of Cub fans from the bleachers of Wrigley Field. On this bright,sunny breeze-cooled day, most of them were semi-dressed in shorts and tank tops, T-shirts or halters. They were part of a crowd of 28,539, at the time the largest ever to watch horse rac ing in the 48-year history of Del Mar.

The picnic atmosphere of the infield where spectators can stretch out among palm trees and lakes and work on their sun tans, has made the track a more attractive place to spend a summer afternoon and turned it into even a more informal place than it was when Bing Crosby first recorded the theme song.

Some things have not changed at "The Saratoga of the West" in 48 years. Crosby's record is still played over the public-address system twice every day, before the first race and after the last. And adjectives such as picturesque, intimate, cozy, informal and relaxed are still used to describe the track where the turf meets the surf and most of Hollywood used to play.

Hollywood stars s topped coming in large numbers years ago. Jack Klugman is about the only steady customer today. Elizabeth Taylor ran one of her horses here the other day but the actress was not seen.

In the old days, the Del Mar Hotel was loaded with stars. Built in 1905 the hotel, a playhouse for such celebrities as Rudolph Valentino, Mary Pickford, Pola Negri, Douglas Fairbanks and Jack Dempsey, closed in 1962 and was torn down in 1969.

Although it is more popular and successful than ever today, Del Mar has had many lean years, a lot of owners and financial problems and some bad management in its 48 years. Success did not come easily. But on July 3, 1937, the day the track opened, while San Diego newspapers were headlining 'Amelia Earhart Missing in Pacific', success seemed assured for Bing Crosby's new Del Mar Turf Club.

On opening day, Crosby, casually dressed in slacks, a floppy sports shirt and yachting cap and smoking a pipe, greeted his first customers at the gate. Later, after changing to a powder-blue sports coat, white slacks and straw hat, he appeared before a crowd of 15,000 and told them: "We hope you all enjoy the meeting - and have a measure of success at the payoff windows".

It seemed appropriate that High Strike, a horse owned by Crosby, won the first race ever run at Del Mar. It went off at 3-1.

Voters hard hit by the Depression returned pari-mutuel wagering to California in 1933, opening the door for thoroughbred racing. The theory in those gloomy days was that racing would create a big breeding industry in the state and provide jobs.

During the 1930's Crosby spent a lot of time in the Del Mar area, using his home on the Don Juan Osuna Ranch as a hideaway from Hollywood and playing golf at Rancho Santa Fe, where he also sponsored his Crosby Clambake.

The 22nd Agriculture District Association was form in 1936 to stage a San Diego County Fair. A site at San Diego's Pacific Beach was first considered, then rejected in favor of Del Mar's San Dieguito River valley. The race-track, historians say, was added as an afterthought, the idea of William A. Quigley of La Jolla.

Quigley took his idea to Crosby, who liked it, and in May, 1936, the Del Mar Turf Club was formed at a meeting at the Warner Brothers studio in Burbank. Crosby was named president, a job he kept until 1945. The first board of directors also included Pat O'Brien, who was elected vice-president, and comedian Oliver Hardy. The executive committee included Gary Cooper and Joe E. Brown.

Crosby and O'Brien put up the money, interest free, for the track, which was built by Work Projects Administration labor.

The architecture is Spanish. The tower and main entrance of the stands were copied from San Antonio's Mission San Jose, and other sections were duplicates of the San Gabriel Mission and San Francisco's Mission Dolores. The adobe for the stands and barns was cut out of nearby hills.

Crosby, O'Brien and their Hollywood friends also provided the track with glamour. Hollywood, through the influence of Crosby and studio bosses Joseph M. Schenck of 20th Century Fox and Louis B. Mayer of MGM was as much a part of Del Mar in the early days as the daily double.

The track's opening day was like a Hollywood premiere. NBC carried it live on radio for 45 minutes and featured Crosby, O'Brien, comedian Bob Burns and announcer Clem McCarthy. Oliver Hardy was the day's honorary steward and Barbara Stanwyck presented a trophy to the winner of the feature race. Robert Taylor, Bette Davis and Una Merkel were Turf Club guests.

Mayer and Schenck ordered their stars to be seen at the track on weekends. CROSBY OFTEN BROADCAST HIS KRAFT MUSIC HALL FROM THE TRACK, AND PARAMOUNT STUDIO STAGED THE PREMIERE OF HIS MOVIE "SING YOU SINNERS" HERE IN 1938.

Crosby's Saturday night parties in the Turf Club were famous, often lasting until dawn. He had an impressive list of entertainers, among them Bob Hope, the Ritz Brothers and Donald O'Connor. Kay Kyser's orchestra supplied the music.

The press parties, which preceded the opening of a meeting, were equally impressive. They featured such stars

as Al Jolson, Jimmy Durante, Danby Thomas and, of course, Bing Crosby.

Durante once broke up a piano on the stage. A frequent track visitor, he always sat at a table on the finish line and joked that he could get his nose over the line before the horses.

On August 5, 1938, the track staged a "Motion Picture Day". The races were named The Exhibitors, The Actors, The Producers, The Screen Writers, The Directors, The Cameramen and the Motion Picture Handicap. The handicap was won by Clarcarole, named for Clark Gable and Carole Lombard.

Douglas Fairbanks Snr and Mary Pickford were frequent visitors at the track. Other guests were Victor McLaglen, Edmund Lowe, Buster Keaton, Eddie Cantor, Red Skelton, W.C.Fields, Dick Powell, Joan Blondell, Edgar Bergen, George Jessel, Walt Disney, Harry James, and Betty Grable.

J. Edgar Hoover was once a regular visitor. Among other famous guests were King Feisal of Iran, King Michael of Bulgaria, General Omar Bradley and Walter Winchell. Maurice Chevalier, celebrating his 75th birthday as a guest in the Del Mar beach home of Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz, made his first visit to a US race-track and was introduced by track announcer Joe Hernandez as "Morris Chev-a-leer."

Don Smith, who ran the track for 25 years, once was asked to pin a flower on Betty Grable before she was to present a trophy in the winners' circle. Grable, he recalled, was wearing a tight, strapless dress. He handed the flower to her, and told her: "I know those great legs of yours are insured, but I'm not sure about the rest of you. You pin this on yourself."

Charlie Whittingham, 72, and Noble Threewitt, 74, have adjoining offices in the adobe barns on the backstretch at Del Mar. They are the only trainers around today who worked at their trade here in 1937 "It was a much smaller business then," Whittingham said. "Those were depression years and bucks were hard to come by." When he first came to Del Mar, Whittingham said: "There were a few cottages and the old Del Mar Hotel on the beach."

There was so little to do in Del Mar then, the trainers, jockeys and stablehands played softball at nearby Solana Beach. "Each stable had a team," Whittingham said. "I played for Crosby's team. He played too, and was a pretty good player." On Saturday nights, Whittingham attended the Crosby parties.

Despite all the changes, Whittingham still enjoys his visits to Del Mar.

Threewitt did not go to Crosby's parties or even socialise much. "I was a kind of a peon, a gypsy trainer." He trains 26 horses here today and said: "I still love it." He is not so sure he likes Del Mar as much. "A lot of people feel it is a vacation town," he said, "but it is not as relaxing today as it used to be. The game has almost outgrown the size of the track."

After getting out of the gate successfully, Del Mar ran into lean years in 1939 and 1940. Attendance dropped so low that exhibition steeplechase races were held in the infield in an attempt to boost it. In 1939, historians recorded, the track made a profit of 69 dollars for a 24-day season.

Business picked up in 1941 when aircraft plants in San Diego started operating around the clock. A horse named False Clue and owned by Eddie (Rochester) Anderson won a race that season and paid a record 239.60 dollars.

World War II halted racing and the track became quarters for Camp Pendelton Marines taking amphibious training on the Del Mar beaches. Later in the war, the Del Mar Turf Club Aircraft Division was formed to make bomber parts on assembly lines set up in the grandstand.

Racing resumed in 1945 and the announcement of Japan's surrender on August 14 was made by Pat O'Brien on the public address system. The

next day, a national holiday celebrating the end of the war, 20,324 spectators bet 958,476 dollars at the track. Crosby and O'Brien got their money back in 1946 but Crosby then sold his interest.

"The track then changed hands almost every year," we were told, with four changes of ownership in six years, and five in eight.

CROSBY RETURNED TO DEL MAR IN 1977 FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 30 YEARS. He said he was impressed by all the changes. He probably would have been surprised, too, the other day to see traffic heavy on Jimmy Durante Boulevard leading into the track, and the thousands of sunbathers in the infield.

IT IS LESS CERTAIN THAT HE WOULD HAVE BEEN IMPRESSED. IN SUCH A CROWD, HE WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO STROLL AROUND THE STANDS, ACCOMPANIED BY GUITARIST PERRY BODKIN, SINGING TO HIS CUSTOMERS.

Editor: This, you will deduce, was not a "vintage" article, but appeared just a few weeks ago - in THE NEW YORK TIMES, we believe and to which we give grateful acknowledgement.

Most Crosby admirers have long been aware of Bing's life-time interest in sport, particularly horse-racing and golf. And Del Mar was - and is - always associated with Bing.

But this seems to be the first time we've seen what might be called an in-depth background to this project of Mr. C's. When you consider that concurrently he was promoting his now legendary Pro-Am golf tournament (but unhappily abandoned at least for the time being) one can again assess the validity of his claim that he was "lazy". For at the time of these obviously time-consuming "hobbies" or sidelines, it was also the time he was making three films a year, making records at least once a month AND broadcasting his equally legendary KRAFT MUSIC HALL shows!

But of course, Bing was doing things he LIKED doing. That makes a big difference, of course. Most of us spend around 40 years of our lives doing a job we don't, perhaps, particularly like though we hasten to add, many do. This comes about thro' sheer economic necessity. And because the world loved what Bing was doing there was no such thing as economic necessity for him! Thus he could sing away - and play away, and consider it all fun. And for the untold pleasure he brought to millions - and still does - who would begrudge him?

It is clear that Del Mar under Bing's inspiration became a rendezvous for what can be read as a Who's Who of Hollywood stars - and it could be that appearing at Del Mar was the prelude to a guest appearance on the Kraft radio show! Bing was, it seems, president of Del Mar for nine years, and must have visited it shortly before he died.

The article also carried two splendid pictures of the jaunty 34-tear-old Bing with his friend Pat O'Brien and others, dressed immaculately - seems he hadn't reached the 'casual' stage then. But, as often happens, despite endless time and trouble and no little expense, they just would not reproduce satisfactorily, carrying too many ultra-black patches. Pity!

The story reproduced on the next page also appeared in a New York paper just before last Christmas - NEW YORK POST, and again our grateful acknowledgements. It moved Justice Francis X Smith to send a letter of appreciation to the writer - and Frank sent us a copy of the story, too.

The items in the third column of the next page came from an article featuring TED ROGERS who, of course, was picked by Bing to appear in his last-years' stage performances.

Many references were made in the past year to a record by one Michael Jackson exceeding the sales of Bing's WHITE CHRISTMAS. We can only treat this with reserve, if only because we are certain no-one knows the exact (or even approximate) sales of Bing's famous record.

Bing made all our Christmases bright—

EVERY Friday, Marion Love Massey, a middle-aged woman of means, drives up to Holy Cross Cemetery in Westwood, Cal., and places a bouquet of flowers on the grave of Bing Crosby.

The ritual never changes, except on Christmas Day, when she places beside the headstone a small Christmas tree with a snowman smoking a pipe.

This week, for the first time since Crosby died in 1977, Mrs. Massey, the fan who never forgot, missed her usual Christmas remembrance of the crooner.

"She was out of town so she could not make it," said a spokesman for the cemetery. "However, she sent an arrangement of poinsettias instead."

If there is one man the whole world cannot forget at Christmas it is Bing Crosby.

This year, as for every Christmas in the past 40 years, his songs, carols and hymns have dominated the airwaves in New York. It is the same everywhere.

Indeed, without him, the season would not shine so brightly. No mere mortal has left an imprint so universal and so lasting on this feast as the man they called the Old Groaner.

New tastes, new fads, new generations, new players come and go, but after Thanksgiving and at the first appearance of mistletoe, the melody of Christmas belongs only to Bing Crosby.

Who could imagine it without his "White Christmas" or "Silent Night?"

Others have woven their magic. Others like Johnny Mathis, Andy Williams, the late Nat King Cole and Perry Como, but Crosby got there first with the best ("White Christmas" in 1942) and it has been his game ever since.

In vain will you listen for a new wave of Christmas music. Modern rock, with all its spinoffs, variations and adventures, offers nothing that even remotely challenges the established ascendancy of Crosby's Christmas.

There is nothing to challenge the charm and grace and easy elegance of Crosby's baritone or the wave of nostalgia that floods the soul listening to him in the days before December 25.

Crosby's durability is all the more remarkable given the unkind twists of fate that shook him before and after death.

Despite his almost unparalleled success in the entertainment business — he recorded 1500 songs, sold 500 million records, made 70 movies and starred on TV for 20 years — Crosby's career skidded late in life.

He didn't make a movie after 1966 and he couldn't get a recording contract after 1970. He said at the time: "My records don't sell anymore."

When he was stricken with a heart attack on a golf course outside Madrid on Oct. 14, 1977, Crosby's star had been eclipsed.

He was 73 or 74 at the time, depending on what birth certificate you read. One had him born in Tacoma, Wash., on May 2, 1904. Later it was claimed that he was actually born on that date in 1903.

After his death, Crosby's good name and unsullied reputation were splashed with a bucket of mud, some of it from his own son.

In print, Bing was depicted as a tyrannical, abusive father, a heavy drinker, an early womanizer, a man who drove his first wife, Dixie Lee, to booze and an early grave.

This, of course, is now standard revisionist showbiz history. It happens to everyone. The latest victim is Steve McQueen.

Still, despite a collapsed career, his death eight years ago and the unflattering portraits that followed, Bing Crosby remains solidly entrenched as the voice of Christmas for much, if not most, of the world.

It was once said that more people heard his voice than any other man who ever lived. "White Christmas," according to the records, sold more than 31 million copies, rivaled only by Elvis Presley's "Hound Dog."

Bing recorded "White Christmas" in 1942, as part of the film "Holiday Inn" with Fred Astaire. Few songs have traveled as well down through the years.

It retains all the warmth and appeal and freshness as the day it was first sung, which explains why so many young people respond to it.

No man has left a legacy like Bing. He is long gone, but his voice remains to caress the world at Christmas and set its heart aglow.

YOU'VE worked with Bing Crosby — what was he really like?

A wonderful man whose memory will always live with me. I did three world tours with him, and it was he who first took me to America. Bing had a quite awesome reputation—a true superstar — but when you met him he was the nicest possible bloke.

WHAT'S your funniest tale about Bing?

When we finished up in New York in December at the end of a tour, I decided I had to buy him a Christmas present. My wife and I went into Tiffany's, one of the best stores in New York. The cheapest jewellery was on the ground floor, and got more expensive as we went up. We couldn't find anything so went on up till we reached the fourth floor where they reckon if you have to ask the price, you can't afford it!

But there we saw it — a solid silver golf putter. Hang the expense, we just had to buy it for Bing.

Early in the New Year, back in England, we received a letter from him (I still keep it in my desk) hoping we had a safe journey. Then he added, "Thank you for the wand, I'm using it all the time!".

When Marion Love Massey next goes to Holy Cross Cemetery, today or a week from today, perhaps she could leave an extra rose on Bing's grave, a token for the millions who listened to him this week, sang along with him, drew joy from him and remember him as the first voice of Christmas.

THE

KRAFT MUSIC HALL

*** RADIO SHOWS ***

KRAFT MUSIC HALL crops up constantly in our pages, with good reason. It was a very large part of Bing's remarkable career. For ten years he broadcast this now legendary programme yet, until the startling discovery of the "Rice" tapes - a story you must now be getting weary of hearing! - little was known in Britain of this very important segment of Bing's activities. True, there were a few short-wave enthusiasts who endeavoured, week after week, to tune in to these shows with varying success.

After the said tapes being restricted for a considerable period, LPs began to appear in increasing numbers featuring songs from the KMH - and note, the period 1936-1946 is considered by many as the halcyon period for this golden voice. Additionally, it became known that Bing had sung a wide variety of songs which never appeared on "commercial" record and this in itself caused tremendous interest. The bombshell contained in Les Gaylor's piece about NBC holding recordings of ALL the KMH shows is something yet to be fully digested - as well as what might, or could, develop from this incredible news.

With all these things in mind, and on the gallantry of Australian member RON DANIELS, who supplied the listings, we embarked on the task of presenting the contents of these shows in BING. Ron was the first to admit his listings were incomplete and welcomed anyone who could correct, and/or fill in gaps. Which was, of course, precisely what happened. We discovered that many members had been working away, culling information from all quarters, about these once-so-mysterious shows.

ERIC GRIFFITHS, of Benfleet, Essex, in particular worked hard to supply missing details &c. and wrote: "Actually, it is more difficult to sort out additions and corrections than doing the whole thing in one go!" And Eric is so correct, to the extent we have done some hard thinking. This was especially necessary since the whole, complete and we are sure, accurate listing turned up! This was through the generosity of the Victorian (Australian) Crosby Society. We have yet to clear that it will be in order for us to serialise this remarkable listing in BING and this we are negotiating.

> So, despite having made a start, with thanks to RON DANIELS, ERIC GRIFFITHS, and others, WE HAVE DECIDED TO START AGAIN. Members who were diligently saving the pages already devoted to KMH will have found it irritating and messy to amend them.

Now that CREMO listings are completed, we intend to devote the final pages of future issues of BING with KMH programmes. They will start with an introduction, and full acknowledgement and we will continue through to the end of the 385 programmes. Those who want to, will be able to detach the relevant sheets with care. And we will endeavour to supply a suitable cover in due course. An important feature missing from this otherwise splendid listing is an INDEX. We are, however, also working on this as it will certainly be quite invaluable to the project.

As evidence of the interest and mystery surrounding KMH, we can give a

current example. ALBERT SAMPLES (Boston, Lincs) wrote: "...I see there is a further Volume 2 tape, made in GERMANY. Twenty songs from radio broadcasts, one of which is I DREAMT I DWELT IN MARBLE HALLS - a new one on me!!"

> Thus Albert. I DREAMT I DWELT IN MARBLE HALLS came from the operetta, THE BOHEMIAN GIRL and as a result of the new list referred to above, I can tell Albert and everyone, that Bing sang this unusual song twice on KMH! The first time as a novelty duet with one Rose Bampton in the broadcast of May 19, 1938 and again, as a solo, on November 17 of the same year. Now, this song has NOT appeared on any of the LPs which have so far eventuated from the "Rice" tapes, e.g. Broadway, Spokane, JSP &c. So where on earth did these people in Germany get it? Are there still other, unknown, sources of KMH material available? As I said - intriguing, isn't it?

The new list we are contemplating starting next issue, will where available, also include most of the distinguished guests who graced KMH. It will be a much fuller, comprehensive, presentation which cannot fail to be of absorbing interest.

PS. I would certainly like to hear I DREAMT I DWELT IN MARBLE HALLS !!

> - not to mention SNOQUALIMIE JO JO (yes, its spelt cofrectly) which Bing broadcast twice in July 1944....

Goodness it was cold...had the brass-monkeys queuing up at the welder's... it wasn't all that warm in bed, so the thought of venturing downstairs were truly intimidating. But, duty is duty...let's go downstairs and see what the post has brought. I brought a letter from JOHN FORD, who lives in Leyton, London - and said:

> "Hope this finds you and the family well Reg. Now, my friends and I are pooling out new pension increase and thinking of buying British Leyland. I thought I might ask you if you would like to put yours in and become a director?"

The morning was suddenly warmer! Humour comes from all directions - mind you, it does illustrate the crazy economic conditions under which we are struggling to exist! Mind you, if - and I say IF - I do come in John, we might run to Westland Helicopters, too....

A STUPENDOUS VENTURE.... by JOHN BIGNELL (Wembley)

The best thing that emerged from the troubled year of 1985 was the wonderful series of albums produced by JONZO RECORDS, now well and truly established. Many of us must have been fearful that such an ambitious project would founder, especially when we learned of early production, teething, problems. It is a fact that JOHN McNICHOLAS has reached the stage where he can confidently plan for no less than six albums a year. It has been calculated that at six albums a year we should be able to expect EVERYTHING Bing recorded up to end-1949 in the next ten years.

It is inevitable that many of us will be even more excited as we progress thro' the halcyon days of the 1930's and get all those "blockbusters" too numerous to mention in the same superb and brilliantly remastered condition we know they achieve. If they can do such a job on the old Whiteman tracks we can look forward to even greater feats in transferring the later tracks.

Continuing:

BING CROSBY - THE CREMO SINGER

Bing's songs in CAPITALS; remaining item orchestral:

MONDAY, 25 January 1932

FATE INTRODUCED ME TO YOU
THAT'S LIVING
Just so
CUBAN LOVE SONG

TUESDAY, 26 January 1932

OLD PLAYMATES
MY HONEY'S LOVIN' ARMS
As time goes by
YOU TAUGHT ME HOW TO LOVE YOU

WEDNESDAY, 27 January 1932

JUST FRIENDS
THANK YOU, MR. MOON
Too late
LOVE YOU FUNNY THING

THURSDAY, 28 January 1932

MY WOMAN
NOBODY'S SWEETHEART
Snuggled on your shoulder
MELODY OF LOVE

FRIDAY, 29 January 1932

NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
KISS BY KISS
Underneath the stars
WHEN WE'RE ALONE

SATURDAY, 30 January 1932

MY SONG
SOMETIME IN SUMMERTIME
Song of the Bayou
BECAUSE I WORSHIP YOU

MONDAY, 1 February 1932

CAN'T WE TALK IT OVER?
ONE OF US WAS WRONG
Can this be love?
GOODNIGHT MOON

TUESDAY, 2 February 1932

STARLIGHT
WAS THAT THE HUMAN THING TO DO?
Daybreak
HOW CAN YOU SAY YOU LOVE ME?

WEDNESDAY, 3 February 1932

WITH A SONG IN MY HEART
I'LL SEE YOU IN MY DREAMS
Without you
I FOUND YOU

THURSDAY, 4 February 1932

LOVE YOU FUNNY THING
AIN'T MISBEHAVIN'
How long will it last?
THE CUBAN LOVE SONG

FRIDAY, 5 FEBRUARY 1932

JUST FRIENDS
THERE'S SOMETHING IN YOUR EYES
A cottage small by the waterfall
ALL OF ME

SATURDAY, 6 February 1932

MY WOMAN
SNUGGLED ON YOUR SHOULDER
Hits from 'Okay'
BEAUTIFUL MELODY OF LOVE.

MONDAY, 8 February, 1932

OH! WHAT A THRILL
WHEN NOBODY ELSE IS AROUND
The Wooden Soldier/The China Doll (Medley)
HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?

TUESDAY, 9 February 1932

HOME ON THE RANGE
I WOULDN'T CHANGE YOU FOR THE WORLD
What is this thing called 'Love'?
I FOUND YOU

WEDNESDAY, 10 February 1932

FATE INTRODUCED ME TO YOU
SHE DIDN'T SAY 'YES'
Auf Wiedersein, my dear.
I DON'T SUPPOSE.

THURSDAY, 11 February 1932

STARLIGHT
BETWEEN THE DEVIL AND THE DEEP BLUE SEA.
Hits from 'Student Prince'
MY CONSOLATION

FRIDAY, 12 February 1932

BY THE LIGHT OF THE SILV'RY MOON
I'M ONLY GUESSING
When we're alone
TWO LOVES.

SATURDAY, 13 February 1932

LOVE YOU FUNNY THING
YES, YOU.
Home
WHERE ARE YOU, GIRL OF MY DREAMS?

MONDAY, 15 February 1932

DANCING ON THE CEILING
YOU'RE MY EVERYTHING
The sun's in my heart.
ALL OF ME

TUESDAY, 16 February 1932

CAN'T WE TALK IT OVER?
THAT'S LIVING
Two loves
KISS ME GOODNIGHT

WEDNESDAY,17 February 1932

ONE OF US WAS WRONG
'LEVEN POUNDS OF HEAVEN
Ramona
MY HIDEAWAY

THURSDAY, 18 February 1932

IT HAPPENED TO ME
WAS THAT THE HUMAN THING TO DO?
My consolation
HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?

FRIDAY, 19 February 1932

I FORGIVE YOU
SOME OF THESE DAYS
Rackety-Coo
AUF WIEDERSEHEN, MY DEAR.

SATURDAY, 20 February 1932

LOVE YOU FUNNY THING
SNUGGLED ON YOUR SHOULDER
Rain on the roof.
BEAUTIFUL MELODY OF LOVE.

MONDAY, 22 February 1932

WHAT A LIFE
KISS BY KISS
Hits from 'New Moon'
THERE'S SOMETHING IN YOUR EYES

TUESDAY, 23 February 1932

JUST FRIENDS
DOWN-HEARTED
By the sycamore tree
HOME ON THE RANGE

WEDNESDAY, 24 February 1932

HOME ON THE RANGE
DINAH
Many happy returns of the day.
WHEN WE'RE ALONE

THURSDAY, 25 February 1932

STARLIGHT
I'M ONLY GUESSING
Drums in my heart
I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT ITS YOU

FRIDAY, 26 February, 1932

CAN'T WE TALK IT OVER?
THANK YOU, MR. MOON.
Hits from 'The Cat and the Fiddle'
DREAM SWEETHEARTS

Songs were listed in the press for a programme on 27 February 1932 as follows. There was, however, some doubt as to whether this programme was broadcast:

SATURDAY, 27 February 1932

A MENDER OF BROKEN HEARTS
BETWEEN THE DEVIL & THE DEEP BLUE SEA
Unknown orchestral item.
KISS ME GOODNIGHT.

Thus ended Bing's first 'sponsored' broadcast series which followed on from his first coast-to-coast 'sustaining' broadcast.

Accompaniment was always by "a studio orchestra' which was liable to vary considerably in its personnel, but CARL FENTON was always the conductor. It is known that Joe Venuti, Eddie Lang, Jerry Colonna (then a musician), Artie Shaw, Tommy Dorsey were invariably in the orchestra. So, Bing had a star line-up from the start.

The programmes came from Studio 8 of the Columbia Broadcasting System's pilot station WABC. They were followed by MUSIC THAT SATISFIES briefly, then the WOODBURY SHOW from 1933 to 1935. From 1935 to 1946 came the durable KRAFT MUSIC HALL programmes.

Bing broadcast throughout his career, overlapping radio with television, and as we know, this incredible career ended in Britain with the BBC.